FRED BA
STATIC AT N

How The Moonies Bought Respect

CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN ON BISHOP TUTU • THE EDITORS ON THE CASE FOR FOREIGN AID

THE NEW REPUBLIC

WRITING AND THE HOLOCAUST

By Irving Howe

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CORRESPONDENCE

TAXING REMARKS

To the editors:

"The Next Tax Reform" (September 15 & 22) missed the mark on crucial points.

Social Security is not a regressive program. Benefits are weighted to provide relatively more generous support to those with lower lifetime incomes. On the revenue side, the earned income tax credit was introduced to alleviate burdens of the payroll tax on those with low incomes. The recent tax reform bill strengthens the provision of the *refundable* earned income tax credit precisely to protect those families with modest incomes.

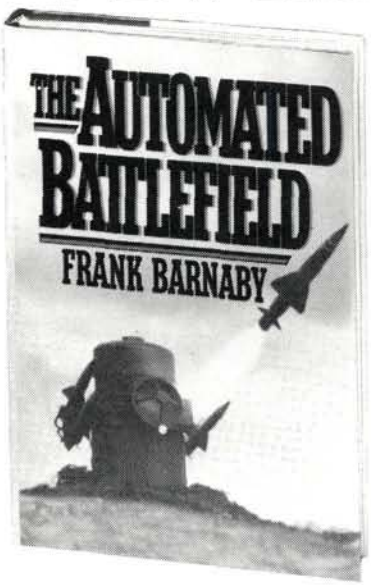
The implication that younger Americans believe Social Security taxes are not "fair" is contradicted by the findings of a national survey conducted a year ago. Overall, 71 percent of respondents described the payroll tax as moderately or very fair; only eight percent as not fair. Persons aged 25 to 34 and 35 to 44 supported the tax at 70 percent and 69 percent, respectively. While 62 percent found the level of payroll tax payments to be about right, fully half found income tax payments to be too high. Given this, the statement that greater income taxes should be substituted for present payroll tax financing is not supported by any public perception of "unfairness."

The editors' solution to pay for Social Security through the income tax negates the clear link between contributions and earned benefits. The other solution is to cut both the FICA tax rates and Social Security benefits. But if benefits are cut, the bulk of the retirement income burden will fall on the inadequate patchwork of employer-provided pensions.

The Social Security program is based on the principle of earned benefits that rests fundamentally on the payroll contribution mechanism. The "salvation" of Social Security proposed by the editors considers the program a mere income transfer system, like welfare. Such a radical change in perspective could unravel the social insurance compact that has been constructed over five decades.

CYRIL F. BRICKFIELD
Executive Director
American Association of Retired Persons
Washington, D.C.

"CHILLING READING ABOUT A NEW FACE OF WAR."*



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L.A., PRO AND CON

To the editors:

As a former editor at *California* magazine, I must take issue with Mickey Kaus's characterization of Los Angeles intellectual life as vapid, dreary, and pathetic ("And the L.A. Intellectual?" August 11 & 18). It's far worse.

There are no bookstores or newsstands to speak of in Southern California. The publishing industry says that Southern California reads more books than anywhere else—but it's all Danielle Steele. So far as newsstands are concerned, you need only know one thing: 7-Eleven is the Rizzoli of Los Angeles.

If journalists are demoralized in Los Angeles, it is most likely because they are treated like scum, not entirely without cause. Most people who call themselves journalists in L.A. are aspiring screenwriters. In L.A., the only thing worse than being a journalist is a smart journalist: journalists are simply sad, but smart journalists must have something wrong with them. Why else would an intelligent person do that? The *Post* is available in the form of the delightful weekly edition. But no one in L.A. would read it even if they gave away six weeks of home delivery with every tank of gas.

Life in Los Angeles is one of intellectual deprivation. Nothing ever happens. No one ever meets anyone outside of their work, or someone from whom they desire any kind of intercourse besides sexual or financial. There is no cultivated elite, no surprise, no friction, no particular social structure, no ethnic admixture. It's foolish to blame the newspapers. Nothing will create an audience for what are, to the Angeleno, abstract matters of complete unconcern. Intellectual life is impossible in our nation's second largest city. There are intellects, and there's life, but they never meet.

FRED ISEMAN
New York, New York

To the editors:

Allow me to defend those who would reject the notion that political intellectualism and a Los Angeles zip code constitute an oxymoron. Like Kaus, I am a journalist and native of one of L.A.'s suburbs who moved to Washington five years ago for career purposes. Not long

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

FOUNDED 1914 — *A Weekly Journal of Opinion* — ISSUE 3,745

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Illusionary Events

"There was no connection between these two releases," said President Reagan October 1 about the swap of Nicholas Daniloff for Gennady Zakharov. He added, regarding the forthcoming Iceland summit, "This is not a summit." Everyone was amused by these two obvious lies. Only conservatives were fuming that Reagan should agree to meet with a man who had challenged his "personal assurance" that Daniloff was not a spy. William Safire called this "the most far-reaching, calculated personal insult ever delivered to an American president by a Soviet leader. . . . Mr. Gorbachev in effect called him a liar." A liar. Imagine that.

By contrast, there was outrage all around the next day, October 2, when Bob Woodward revealed in the *Washington Post* that the Reagan administration has been conducting a self-described "disinformation program," involving "real and illusionary events"—that is, spreading lies—about Colonel Qaddafi's terrorist plans and our possible response to them.

The two obvious lies were less offensive than the disinformation campaign, I suppose, because no one was deceived by them. Still, there is a connection between Reagan's habit of telling brazen whoppers and his administration's willingness to spread a more subtle web of deceit. Richard Nixon was a liar. Reagan is not a liar so much as a man with no natural instinct for the truth. He gives the world the shape he would like it to have. Thus the repeated, amazing episodes in which he describes events as real that actually occurred in old movies.

No diplomatic nicety required Reagan to say that the swap was not a swap and the summit is not a summit. He didn't want them to be a swap or a summit, so they weren't. "This is not a summit . . . because we have agreed that, as to the summits, that this one would be here" in the United States. This one is not here, ergo, it's not a summit. Q.E.D.

The day the disinformation plan was revealed, Reagan's first reaction was to declare, "I'm challenging the veracity of the entire story." Just a few minutes later, before the same group, he admitted that "here and there" there may be "something to hang it on." And meanwhile Secretary of State Shultz more or less confirmed the story. But that didn't stop Reagan from insisting to the press, a bit later, "We didn't tell any lies, and we weren't doing any of these disinformation things." We don't lie, therefore we weren't lying.

Is it any wonder that, in such a culture of woozy artifice, aides wouldn't think twice about spreading lies to serve an important policy goal? Senate investigators have concluded that the administration never intended a direct campaign of deceiving Americans. Rather, this was a campaign directed at foreigners—who cares about them?—that got misapplied by an overenthusiastic National Security Council staffer. That explanation fails to deal with the fact that White House aides independently confirmed the false story once it was out. But I think we can accept that Americans weren't victims of a formal, organized disinformation campaign by their own government. It was just the usual informal, confused disinformation campaign practiced by every administration, pushed a bit further by "senior officials" with a special lack of interest in the truth.

Secretary Shultz's argument that government lies are justifiable in times of war, and we are effectively at war with Libya, deserves special contempt. First, this is not World War II. If we are in extremis now, we might as well give up any nostalgic hope for a time when the government will tell us the truth. Second, even in wartime, the proper target of deception is the enemy. Misleading a government's own citizens can be a consequence, but it shouldn't be the goal. In this case, although the main target may have been Qaddafi, part of the campaign was an effort to keep American public opinion at a full boil in preparation for further military action. That is the stuff of totalitarian agitprop.

Nevertheless, the press indignation over this episode is a bit thick. Just as Reagan's obvious lies create a culture in which more insidious forms of deception

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
OCTOBER 27, 1986

TWO-TENTHS OF ONE PERCENT

The Senate has reversed an embarrassing "no" vote, and it now seems that Philippine president Corazon Aquino will get the $200 million in economic aid she requested in a speech to Congress last month. There shouldn't have been any argument about it. The United States needs Aquino, and she needs us. Her democratic government is the best hope for the Filipino people. After years of supporting the Marcos kleptocracy, we have an obligation to help his successor replenish the ransacked treasury he left behind. Yet as we go to press, the House and Senate still haven't decided where to get the money for Aquino. The Senate version of the aid bill says it would have to be paid for by snipping other countries' shares. The House doesn't specify.

The debate over foreign aid is almost always agonizing, but this year it is especially so. Under pressure to meet Gramm-Rudman deficit reduction targets, both the House and the Senate have made big cuts in the State Department's Economic Support Fund, the chief source of direct cash aid. But since most of the ESF's roughly three-and-a-half billion dollars is earmarked in advance for a handful of countries (Egypt and Israel mainly, but Pakistan, Ireland, Portugal, Tunisia, and a few others get sizable chunks too), the cuts leave hardly anything for the rest of the world. A long list of worthy countries will have to scramble for a share of the shrinking supply of Yankee dollars. Under the House bill, the ESF for all non-earmarked countries would be cut 40 percent, from last year's $1 billion to $600 million. The Senate would impose a 16 percent cut. Food and development assistance, which comes out of a separate fund, would be cut too.

The Reagan administration complains that the cuts threaten what it has come to rely on as an important means of winning friends and influencing people around the world. But with elections approaching in a few weeks, Congress recognizes that the easiest way to cut the deficit is by taking on the least popular spending program of all. The public doesn't mind helping foreign countries suddenly beset by earthquake or famine. But most Americans think that the foreign aid we supply on a regular basis ends up getting wasted. Why not take care of American citizens first? The temptation to look at foreign aid as an "us v. them" issue has never been greater. Foreign aid, though, should not be seen as a handout to the Third World, but as part of the business of maintaining sensible, mutually beneficial relations with poor countries.

Thus we should pursue trade policies that, at a minimum, do not sabotage the goals of foreign aid programs, and that, ideally, serve those goals. The need to support foreign friends would not be so pressing, for example, if this country practiced the free market principles we so often preach to the rest of the world. Subsidized foreign sales of beef and rice under the current U.S. farm bill take millions of dollars worth of market share from countries such as Uruguay (1986 economic aid: $14 million) and Thailand (1986 economic aid: $31.5 million). (See "Stuffing Farmers, Stiffing Peasants," TNR, August 11 & 18.) The Multi-Fiber Arrangement's "voluntary" import restrictions coddle U.S. textile producers and confer windfalls on countries (mainly relatively advanced ones such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea) that are lucky enough to be assigned quotas. The Philippines claims it could supply over ten percent of the U.S. market if these quotas were scrapped, compared to the two or three percent it supplies now. The benefits to the Philippine economy would be both larger and more lasting than the $200 million Aquino got.

The U.S. sugar quota is perhaps the best example of how we undermine our own foreign aid program. Since 1981 the federal government has guaranteed American sugar producers triple the world price for their crop. This consumer rip-off is enforced by means of strict quotas on sugar imports from lower cost foreign producers, many of whom are poor Third World countries. These quotas do help the countries that receive them by permitting them to sell in the U.S. market at an inflated price. But there's a catch. To maintain those high prices, the United States must restrict supply—by reducing the quotas. Since 1982 such cuts have cost Caribbean nations as many as 130,000 jobs and up to $300 million in income. The Dominican Republic alone lost $75 million—meanwhile, it received $104 million in U.S.

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aid in fiscal 1986. The Caribbean Basin Initiative, a centerpiece of the Reagan administration's foreign aid policy, has been largely undone by the sugar policy.

Exports to the United States are now more critical than ever to the Third World's dollar-hungry debtor nations. Between 1981 and 1984, however, the United States actually closed off more of its markets. It's also worth remembering that, by insisting the Third World repay its commercial bank creditors in full, with interest, the Reagan administration is actually encouraging a massive capital transfer *from poor to rich*. Since 1983 Latin America has been sending out $30 billion more per year than it has received. That's five percent of the region's combined gross product.

But assuming we eliminated trade barriers and gave debtors a break, would there still be a case for bilateral aid? Morally, the answer is yes. The United States is the richest country in the world. We should share some of our wealth with the less fortunate countries, many of which would still need help even with free trade and debt relief. As it stands now, we're by no means excessively generous. Though we gave $9.6 billion in development aid in 1985, that was just over two-tenths of one percent of our GNP, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. That tied us with Ireland for last among 18 leading industrial nations—and Ireland receives aid from us!

The United States does supply much of the funding for multilateral agencies such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and regional development

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

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1. BODYGUARD OF SIGHS

Disinformation. Reports that the press was led astray in an anti-Qaddafi psywar campaign has reporters aghast, though many news consumers don't care and wish the papers would shut up. Americans seem willing to absorb any level of idiotic "persuasion" when it is consumer advertising, but the culture (or at least its high end) has a problem with the equally widespread diplomatic variety.

2. TAPES OF WRATH

Hostages. What is the difference between the "hyped" Daniloff case and that of the "ignored" Beirut hostages? It isn't that Daniloff was a reporter; so is hostage Andersen. It is the presence in the Daniloff case of a simple villain. The Soviets-as-bad-guys provided a familiar structure of conflict on which to peg exploitative stories. Beirut, on the other hand, is incomprehensible. Less simple conflict equals less melodrama equals less news.

3. SPIRIT OF SUMMITRY

Summit. Discussion of the Reagan-Gorbachev meeting remained blurred right up to the last minute, mostly because nobody could quite grasp the "summit's" real purpose. However, the report that the site was a haunted house caught on. Ghosts at least are simple and familiar. The Treaty of Ghent was signed in Washington's most famous haunted house, and look what that did for U.S.-U.K. relations.

4. SUB ROSA

Soviet submarine. The interest displayed in the accident aboard the Soviet submarine had only a little to do with the nuclear arms aboard. It had to do with the Soviets' willingness to admit it in a timely manner. No one seemed to care about the presence of a nuclear-laden Soviet sub in the Atlantic, a So What? pre-summit attitude in striking contrast to the atmosphere of 1960's U-2 summit.

5. WODIN-HEADED POLITICS

Extreme Right. Couer d'Alene, in the heart of the Northwest woods where the Aryan Nations has made itself at home, has been under attack. Lyndon LaRouche's Leesburg headquarters has been occupied by the FBI—on orders, LaRouche says, from Gorbachev. A white-power group in the farm belt, meanwhile, has opted to save a black farmer's land. The extreme right manages to maintain just enough visibility to keep its front-page slot.

6. HOOSIER STATESMAN NOW?

The Hill. As a result of his outspoken positions on the Philippines and South Africa, Senator Richard Lugar is emerging as either (*a*) the conscience of the Republican Party or (*b*) an early victim of statesmanitis who is taking his own press clips too seriously. Lugar's positioning may be rooted in a growing rivalry with Robert Dole.

7. JAM SESSION

Transportation. The infrastructure debate—you remember, the roads are crumbling and the bridges falling down—may have grown quiescent. But a tangent—the insufficiency of U.S. highways—is catching on, due largely to miserable highway planning. Gridlock in the suburbs has made highway funding an election issue in various localities. The outstanding event in this mess, however, is the decision by the AAA to move its HQ out of suburban Virginia, citing traffic problems as a primary reason.

8. UP IN SMOKE

Drugs. The most remarkable thing about the Great Drug Fade-Out is that it occurred *before* the election. There is a chance that the Senate will not even vote on its bill before going home. *Time* magazine went in three weeks from a Death's Head drug cover to a press piece casting doubt on the entire fuss. As for crisis-speak, it is now limited largely to daytime TV talk shows.

9. THE WE DECADE

Values. Are altruistic, communitarian values making a comeback? They are if one totes up magazine covers. City slicks, little quarterlies, and even business monthlies are heralding a backlash against the seven deadly yuppie sins. The theory is that former 1960s counterculture types are stressed-out by the materialistic merry-go-round, and are opting off. The Zeitgeist question is, Are we seeing trend spotting, trend creation, or editorial trend reversal, the original Yuppie Invasion having been monstrously hyped all along?

10. MICKEY MOUSE BIRTHDAY

Celebrations. At least it took a while for the Statue of Liberty festivities to descend to show biz glitz. The Constitution Bicentennial has kicked off that way, with the first public event attached to Disney World's 15th anniversary. Retired Chief Justice Burger joined Mickey Mouse on stage in Orlando to discuss the meaning of the document. See you real soon, Constitution. Why? Because we *like* you.

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banks. But the IMF, which acts as a collection agency for banks in the Third World, is hardly a charitable venture. All of these agencies provide assistance in the form of loans, some interest-free, most not. Most foreign aid is in the form of grants. The World Bank raises considerably less of its capital in the United States than it does in Japan. It gets about the same amount from the United States as it does from West Germany and Switzerland.

And from a cold political point of view, foreign aid is in our self-interest. That's why it was both right and necessary to give money to the Aquino government. It is the best reason to give so much to Egypt and Israel. That money is the price we pay to keep peace between the two biggest powers in the world's most volatile region, and to support a democratic ally of strategic importance. American money can often do as much or more as American arms to check the spread of Soviet influence. When the Kissinger Commission report on Central America came out back in 1983, there was a lot of talk about a "Marshall Plan" for the region. Now that has been quietly forgotten. Central American countries are facing the possibility of cuts in economic aid. The Soviets pay $3 billion a year to keep Cuba's economy going. But under the proposed cuts for this year, it's likely that we won't be able to repeat the $156 million we spent last year to bail out democratic Costa Rica.

Bolivia recently invited U.S. troops into its territory to help wipe out cocaine production centers. It's the first time anything has shown signs of making a dent in that impoverished Andean country's cocaine traffic. In return for sacrificing a source of dollars reckoned to be worth $600 million a year, the Bolivians are asking $100 million to shore up their Central Bank's reserves. There won't be any room for that if the proposed cuts pass. How can we expect the Bolivians to take our commitment to fighting drugs seriously? Meanwhile, Congress is about to spend $1.5 billion on a drug bill, much of which will go to interdiction on the U.S. border, an enterprise that has already failed.

This journal gave Gramm-Rudman its grudging support. We thought it might serve to spur Congress into the hard job of setting priorities among competing items in the budget. In the case of foreign aid, however, Gramm-Rudman has served as an excuse to abandon setting priorities. Cutting foreign aid self-destructively pits the interests of one U.S. ally against another. Increasing foreign aid is the way to establish it as an indispensable function of the national government. After all, it's not a job that can be left to the states.

NOTEBOOK

□ ADDENDUM: Zimbabwe's prime minister, Robert Mugabe, the newly minted honorary doctor of laws from the University of Massachusetts (see "Dictator's Degree," TNR, October 20), told the academic convocation in his honor that accusations against his government—that it jailed, tortured, and murdered hundreds of dissidents—were "propaganda" by "our enemies." No surprise there. But what about the remarks of the president of U. Mass, David Knapp, at the same ceremony? Knapp called Mugabe "a champion of human rights" who was being honored for his "enduring and effective translation of a moral ethic into a strong, popular voice for freedom." With this remarkable statement, Knapp reveals either his utter ignorance of the well-documented human rights situation in Zimbabwe or his utter misunderstanding of the meaning of words like "human rights," "moral ethic," and "freedom." At best, what can be said of Mugabe is that he has shown that Zimbabwe is not less adept than Rhodesia at tormenting its people. This reflects one of the melancholy truths of the postcolonial era. But American universities didn't honor Ian Smith, and even Jerry Falwell's college isn't giving honorary degrees to P. W. Botha. The University of Massachusetts is a public institution, the incarnation in higher education of the values of the state with what is said to be the most advanced liberal political culture. This degree for Robert Mugabe, a scandal for both Massachusetts and liberalism, went virtually unnoticed and uncommented upon. And that is perhaps the really telling scandal.

□ KING CANUTE AWARD:

U. of Colorado Panel Allows Sex in Dorms

—*New York Times*, October 2

□ DRUG-HYPE WATCH: This week's winner is Attorney General Ed Meese. Declaring that crack is a "crisis of epidemic proportions in some areas," Meese proposed the creation of no less than 24 special crack task forces. Reporting Meese's announcement in the *New York Times*, Philip Shenon noted in the second paragraph that "a study last month by the Drug Enforcement Administration ... found that crack, while readily available in a dozen cities, was a 'secondary problem' that had been exaggerated by news organizations."

ON THE HILL

HEROES AND ZEROES

WHO IS THE MOST highly rated member of the U.S. Congress? Bob Dole, you say? No way. Rosty? Wright? Rangel? No, No, and No. Kennedy or Kemp or Packwood or Nunn? Guess again. Gramm or Rudman? Gephardt or Gingrich? Sorry, none of the above. In the last Congress, for which the books are now closed and scorecards completed, the national legislator who pleased more people in more places more often than anyone else was

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none other than Representative Glenn M. Anderson, an old-fashioned New Deal Democrat from California, now in his ninth term representing the working-class neighborhoods around the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. So say the ratings.

The ratings are assessments of who voted "correctly" on critical roll calls in the Congress, compiled by about 70 different organizations reflecting virtually every political inclination or interest of consequence in this country: labor, business, environmentalists, arms controllers, defense promoters, church groups, advocates of children and the elderly, women and veterans, farmers, civil libertarians, and ideologues of various stripes. Some groups, of course, do not produce ratings (the National Rifle Association comes to mind) but most of the powerful groups do. Some are organized strictly and unabashedly in the interests of their members, while others style themselves as "public interest" lobbies. Some are clearly special interests; others less so. Although the analyses of congressional voting records are as different in substance and style as are the groups themselves, there are elements common to all of them.

Each group generally selects five or ten or 20 "key" votes to make up its litmus test. (During the 98th Congress, the Senate conducted 673 roll call votes, the House 988.) Although these reviews are prepared at the end of each year, or at the conclusion of a two-year sitting of Congress, the votes selected are seldom surprises; they frequently address those topics on which the group lobbied or testified during the year. In order to inform their members and like-minded financial contributors (and also to remind the media) which votes matter most to a particular interest, the organizations prepare tally sheets on selected floor votes, which are variously described as "reviews," "summaries," "reports," "analyses," or "scorecards."

The ratings all begin with the premise that votes cast on the floor of the Senate or House of Representatives are among the most important of the professional activities of a senator or representative. Indeed, casting floor votes is about the only part of the job that members of Congress these days must actually perform themselves. There are no proxies allowed for floor votes. Under no circumstance—not the gravest illness or the most important official business elsewhere—is a member of Congress permitted to vote when absent from the actual chamber to which he or she has been elected.

FROM THE SELECTED votes, most groups derive an overall rating that signifies the degree to which Congressman X or Senator Z voted as the group would have preferred. Thus the NAACP determines that a representative who voted consistent with their views four out of nine times earned a "GPA" of 44 percent, while other, friendlier legislators earned grades of 78 percent or 100 percent. Similarly, the National Taxpayers Union assigns "Congressional Spending Scores," Americans for Democratic Action determines members' "Liberal Quotient," and the Communications Workers and the Consumer Federation of America each designate their respective congressional "Heroes" and "Zeroes." On the other hand, some groups don't believe that all votes count equally. They won't give you a 90 percent approval rating if you voted wrong on the one issue most important to them.

IN THE WEEKS before November's congressional elections, a number of the groups will issue their ratings on votes cast in the current 99th Congress. Campaign staffs are usually quick to trumpet the fact that the National Association of Worthy Citizens or whoever has accorded their candidate a rating of "100" or "Hero" or "friend of the working class." But one's opponent may also loudly proclaim that the incumbent is a zero in the eyes of women, or businessmen, or civil libertarians. In that case, there is frequently a countervailing interest, or a rival for the same interest, that has given the member a better review.

Different unions or rival senior citizens groups, for example, will have different rosters of heroes for two reasons. They may have taken opposite sides of the same role call vote. This occurred, for instance, during the 1983 debate on Social Security reform. The National Alliance of Senior Citizens supported an amendment raising the retirement age to 67; the National Council of Senior Citizens, however, favored keeping the age at 65. But just as frequently rival groups will have focused on different votes altogether. The American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association had only two of the same votes in their 98th scorecards.

The congressional rating game can make a big difference. Representative Tony Coelho, chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, has estimated that an endorsement from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which is largely determined by an incumbent's annual Chamber voting rating, can mean as much as $100,000 in campaign contributions from businessmen and corporate PACs. In 1979 several Republican senators complained so vehemently about the low scores they received that the Chamber revised its ratings. Five more votes were added. The complainers, who had voted the Chamber's position on all five, won the coveted endorsement, and presumably the accompanying prize money.

How did Glenn Anderson come to be so highly rated by so many? He began with a base on the left, but voted according to a broader sensibility. The NEA, the National Women's Political Caucus, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, and the National Abortion Rights Action League all gave him perfect scores. The NAACP gave him a grade of 90. The Consumer Federation of America: 92 in 1983 and 100 in 1984. By the lights of the League of Women Voters, he voted correctly eight out of nine times.

Crucial to Anderson's overall success in the eyes of interest groups overall, however, were votes he cast in favor of several big-ticket defense programs, like the MX missile and the B-1 bomber. These votes raised Anderson's stock

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among conservative evaluators: the American Security Council gave him a 40, Free Congress PAC a 39. Moreover, a handful of pro-business votes during the 1984 immigration reform debate won Anderson a healthy 63 percent approval rating in 1984 from the Chamber of Commerce (70 usually earns a member an automatic endorsement for re-election). Remarkably, Anderson voted with the Chamber on ten of 16 votes, and improved his score 53 points from the previous year, at the same time that he was voting with the AFL-CIO on 12 of 13 votes affecting "the interests of workers."

ANDERSON WAS ABLE to do this mainly because labor and business—for all one might expect them to be on opposite sides of the same issues—were concerned with completely different issues. Only three of labor's 13 key votes appeared on the Chamber's list of 16—and on two of those roll calls they shared the same position: against final passage of the immigration reform bill (albeit for different reasons) and support for the National Endowment for Democracy. Only once in 1984 did the AFL-CIO and the Chamber pick opposite sides of the same vote: on an amendment that would have allowed federal suits against companies for injuries caused by exposure to hazardous wastes.

Anderson's experience illustrates the possibilities for popularity for an alert member of Congress who is familiar with the legislative priorities of numerous organizations. He or she can vote with interest groups on the amendments that matter most to them without having the vote count against you in someone else's ratings. The same issues, and near-identical amendments, recur year after year. Yet there are always new circumstances to be cited—the president's speech yesterday, the new tax bill or budget projections, the Soviets' latest outrage—to explain away any seeming inconsistencies.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, therefore, the most ideologically committed senators and representatives tend to rack up both perfect scores and complete zeroes. Sure, Ted Kennedy and Howard Metzenbaum are well regarded by the Consumer Federation of American, the unions, and the ACLU. But they get rousing zeroes form the right-wing American Conservative Union and Americans for Constitutional Action. Similarly, Jesse Helms scores high with the ACU and ACA, but is a complete nothing as far as the League of Women Voters and the National Association of Social Workers are concerned. If they want more friends and fewer enemies, they could emulate the highly rated yet still somehow underrated Glenn Anderson.

THOMAS O. MELIA AND SUEANNE PFIFFERLING

Thomas O. Melia and Sueanne Pfifferling are the editors of *How They Rate* (Quadriga Research, Inc.), a biennial compendium of interest group reviews of key votes in Congress and ratings of members of Congress.

POSTCARD SOUTH AFRICA

TUTU'S ENTHORNMENT

Cape Town

Conor: Monday, September 29, was the feast of St. Michael and All Angels, so we proceeded to the Church of St. Michael and All Angels, situated in what is known as the Observatory District of Cape Town. There we heard Cape Town's new Anglican archbishop, Desmond Tutu, say the patronal Mass.

Yes, Mass. Anglicanism in South Africa appears to be quite "High," generally speaking, and the Church of St. Michael and All Angels, Cape Town, is in the liturgical stratosphere: holy water, candles on the altar, Stations of the Cross, genuflections, and above all, incense till all is no more. As I inhaled the warm, sweet, sickly fumes, I felt that incense ought to carry a celestial health warning.

I had last seen and heard Desmond Tutu officiate when he was still only a common-or-garden bishop, at St. Matthew's Church in Soweto. That was a little less than a year ago, but I thought Tutu looked a lot more than a year older: thinner, more stooped, the face a little shrunken, and careworn as it had not been before.

Patrick: He certainly looked much older than I had thought from television. On TV, you could see just those little gray tufts. Now it all looks gray.

Conor: At the beginning of the sermon, he referred to his recent enthronement as archbishop. "I got a telegram," he said, "congratulating me on my 'enthornment.' Sometimes I think that's really the right word." He didn't enlarge on that, but I felt it wasn't just a joke.

The Church of St. Michael and All Angels in Cape Town and the Church of St. Matthew in Soweto belong to the same ecclesiastical communion, but are worlds apart culturally. St. Matthew's is totally black African. St. Michael's is part of English-speaking white South Africa (a few "Coloreds" there too, but very Anglicized). Desmond Tutu can more than hold his own in both environments, but at St. Michael's, it costs him. At St. Matthew's, preaching in Xhosa, he had been happy. He cracked jokes, and the congregation laughed with him. His arms spread wide in easy, confident gestures; he even danced, at the end, a kind of "high-life" with members of the congregation. At St. Michael's the archbishop gripped the sides of his pulpit firmly with both hands throughout his sermon. No gestures, except for a slight rhythmical movement of the head. No jokes, except that single, painful one about "enthornment." And no suggestion of *dancing*; good heavens, no!

There was some grumbling at first among white Anglicans when Tutu became their archbishop, and some of them even left the church. He seems to have won over most of those who remained, with his obvious ability and

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sincerity, with his charm and his dignity. The new archbishop daily delivers quite a powerful implicit anti-apartheid message by showing his white flock that it is not such a terrible thing, after all, to have a black person in authority over you. But he is paying a price to get that message across. I feel he has left his heart in Soweto.

At a party after the Mass, one of his white hosts offered him a drink. Desmond Tutu drew back a little, registering mock surprise. "Are you sure," he asked, "that you *ought* to be offering me that?" The reference was to the apartheid laws restricting the provision of alcoholic liquor to natives. The hosts laughed, rather queasily. I felt that Tutu might be getting a bit of his own back, for so often having to be on his best behavior, according to standards and conventions laid down by white South Africa.

ON OCTOBER 2, at the university, I had my first serious encounter with the militant students. I had accepted an invitation from the Social Sciences Students' Committee to take part in a debate on the subject of "the academic boycott." When I showed up and asked who would present the case for the other side, I was told, "Nobody. You are to speak for about five minutes, and then it's questions."

It began to dawn on me that I had been set up. By accepting the invitation, I had let myself in, not for a debate, but for an organized grilling. It was a neat trap. Saving what I could, I told them I didn't accept their "five-minute" ordinance, but would speak as long as necessary to present my case. Then they could put their questions. This was agreed.

Patrick: The "debate" was held in a large semicircular theater with nearly all of its 250 seats occupied. The audience was composed mainly of white students, with about 50 non-whites. The proceedings began with the anti-boycott statement.

Conor: I reiterated my support for economic sanctions. As for the academic boycott, I said that its impact on the apartheid regime would be nil, but the inroads it was making on academic freedom and freedom of expression were very serious indeed. These values would be vital to a non-racial South Africa and to other free societies. What was being conducted in South Africa under the banner of an academic boycott seemed to be a sort of creeping form of the Cultural Revolution, which had wrecked the universities of China and which the China of today repudiated with abhorrence.

Patrick: Then the "questions" began. The organizer of the meeting, Patrick Bulger, led off with a spring of seven questions, written out in advance, and so ignoring Conor's actual remarks. Bulger's questions were really just the same one over and over again: " What gives you the moral right to break the boycott?" Then the questions from the floor started. Still the same questions, in slightly different language.

Conor: With the odd variation. One question was: "How can you call yourself a liberal and be against the academic boycott?" I said it was precisely *because* I was a liberal that I was against the academic boycott. This was met with yells of derision and execration, from a determined group of students.

Patrick: Later on, the questions got worse: "Why have you come here to insult the sufferings of the African masses?" And so on. Tempers were getting hot.

Conor: Mine included.

Patrick: The questioning was conducted mostly by a group of about 15 students working in relay. They were supported by a larger number—maybe 30 or 40—who hissed or yelled, or laughed nastily, at each one of Conor's answers. A different section of the audience applauded Conor, or laughed when he scored a point. The division was not on racial lines, except that no black (as distinct from "Coloreds" and Indians) actually spoke. But a lot of people just sat there silently.

Conor: Those who just sat there included most of the faculty members present. Only two of these spoke, both of them in favor of boycotting the institution of which they themselves are part. The members who did not utter—or were not present—included some whom I know to be opposed to the academic boycott. The depressing thing about yelling at people is that it so often works.

Patrick: I wondered how the *students* justified calling for a boycott of a university where they attend classes and hope to graduate.

Conor: The point came up. One student, an Indian, made a speech, in the form of a question, in which he denounced his university as a capitalist institution, tied to the apartheid regime, and so to fascism. I asked him how he personally could bring himself to be part of such a detestable institution? I couldn't quite understand his answer, but it seemed to be to the general effect that for *him* to attend the University of Cape Town was a revolutionary act, but for *me* to visit it was counter-revolutionary.

Patrick: He was clever. He *sounded* as if he were answering your question, though he wasn't.

Conor: If people like those student comrades were in charge in South Africa after the first non-racial elections, it would be a poor lookout, not only for the universities, but for any further free elections, for freedom of expression, and for a lot of other things. But it is really quite unlikely that people like that could win power through free elections. They claim—invariably and indefatigably—to speak for "the people of South Africa," and they do speak for considerable (and probably increasing) numbers of young urban blacks. But it is clear that there are other large groups of blacks, both urban and rural, who would be most unlikely to vote either for the comrades in the townships, or for the middle-class militant students who ape them.

As for "the ANC," it is at present a loose coalition, including moderates of the Tutu stamp as well as comrades and student militants. Apartheid itself holds the coalition together. Non-racial elections would be likely to dissolve

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the coalition into competing sections. The Tutu-style section might well be more numerous. (At St. Michael's Tutu again condemned "the necklace"; the comrades will never forgive him.)

Nobody can know what the South African people actually want until the day when the people, all of them, are for the first time free to say what they want, in non-racial elections on a common roll. That day is not exactly around the next corner, but the recent vote in the U.S. Senate may have brought it a little nearer.

CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN AND PATRICK O'BRIEN

Conor Cruise O'Brien is the author most recently of *The Siege: An Outsider Looks at Zionism* (Simon and Schuster). Patrick O'Brien is a free-lance writer. © 1986 Conor Cruise O'Brien.

THE PRESS

MY IOWA

ON MAY 14, 1986, Iowa governor Terry Branstad, the Iowa Development Commission, and a host of Iowa business people held a "Discover Iowa" press luncheon at the Metropolitan Club in New York City. The press kit issued that day was so voluminous that it has taken me several months to complete my voyage of discovery. Now I am ready to report the truth about the Iowa that nobody knows.

Harkening back to that day, the media in attendance were told over a delicious meal that they had been focusing too much attention on the "farm crisis" in the Midwest, painting an inappropriately black picture of Iowa life. No mention was made of the numerous Midwestern farmers and politicians who had sojourned east in the past three years, hat in hand, seeking (*a*) federal funds and (*b*) journalists willing to paint a black picture of Iowa life in order to help them secure even more federal funds. Instead, the journalists were told that it was high time they dropped the gloom-and-doom stuff and started telling "the rest of the Iowa story" to the American people.

The opening remarks were made by Gannett chairman Allen H. Neuharth, who used the occasion to pillory the Eastern media establishment for its obsession with bad news. Neuharth had been invited to address the luncheon because (thanks to all this bad news) Gannett had recently bought the *Des Moines Register* at the "bargain" price of $200 million. "Abe Rosenthal at the *New York Times* and Ben Bradlee at the *Washington Post* have built their reputations on spotlighting problems—real or imagined—not on solutions," he said. In his opinion, the best thing that Iowans could hope for was that East Coast journalists would just forget about Iowa entirely, "writing nothing at all."

Writing nothing at all about Iowa wasn't exactly what the governor and the Iowa Development Commission had in mind when they threw this Gotham shindig, but Branstad (who had not read Neuharth's remarks before the luncheon) said nothing untoward about Neuharth's performance. Instead, he made a few pleasant remarks of his own, and then said he would entertain questions from the floor. There weren't a whole lot to entertain after the roomful of journalists had been chastised for the crummy job they were doing. The governor did a bit of hemming, and at least as much hawing, reiterating what had been said before: that Iowa was a damn fine place to raise your kids or your capital, and that it was badly in need of discovering.

AND JUST TO help the few well-meaning journalists who might be interested in telling the real Iowa story, the Iowa Development Commission supplied those in attendance with press kits containing 100 story ideas. They drew attention to these little-known facts:

*There will be an opera world premiere in Indianola this year.
*An Iowa cheese has earned national recognition.
*A young Iowa telecommunications firm is growing into a giant.
*An Iowa university has developed an Asian studies program.
*Elk Horn, Iowa, has been chosen as the site of the National Danish Museum.
*The city of Grinell, Iowa, is developing a comprehensive plan for its future.

There is more to the Iowa story. Scenic railroads are being honored. Major direct marketers are growing from humble beginnings. University of Northern Iowa School of Business graduate students are doing very well on their CPA exams. Versatility has spurred growth for an Iowa pants manufacturer. And, incredibly, a tiny school has won the state basketball championship (Class A).

What other points about Iowa needed to be conveyed to the American people? Consider this sampling of story ideas, exactly as they appeared in the press kit:

*"Third Graders Promote Community to Out-of-Town Kids."
*"Cedar Falls An Important Stop for Recruiting Teachers."
*"Popcorn Company Specializes in Exports."
*"Publishing Company Offers Vertical Integration."
*"School District Offers Honors Diplomas."
*"Ambulance Company Offers Unique Design."
*"University Offers Unique Curriculum."
*"Homecoming to Honor Iowans Worldwide."
*"Southern Iowa Town Enjoys Business Rebirth."
*"Des Moines Attorney Heads Olympic Committee."
*"Hoover Papers Attract Scholarly Attention."
*"National Research Laboratory Still Churning Out Innovations."
*"Gummi Bears Moving to Iowa."
*"Bag Company Switches Direction With Microwave Popcorn Bags."
*"Credit Operation Consolidates in Iowa."

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At the end of Neuharth's speech, he told Governor Branstad: "Go right ahead with your 'Discover Iowa' campaign. But be realistic. The Eastern media is much more likely to *forget* Iowa than it is to discover it."

But with story ideas like these out of the bag, surely Neuharth recognizes that this just will not be possible.

JOE QUEENAN

Joe Queenan is a New York writer. His last piece for TNR was "Great Scott!" (September 15 & 22).

The messiah with money.

IN MOON'S ORBIT

REMEMBER THE MOONIES? Back in the '70s, they wanted to steal your children. Cults were scarier than crack in those days, and following the mass murder-suicide of Jim Jones and his followers in Guyana, the Unification Church led by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon was among the scariest. Moon, a Korean industrial magnate and part-time theologian who claimed to be on a first-name basis with God, Jesus, Moses, and Buddha, was public enemy No. 1.

Today Moon is as American as cheating on your income taxes. Or so it seemed at the Omni-Shoreham hotel in Washington late last month, where the Reverend Moon's World Media Association held a lavishly funded, four-day conference on the benign subject of "Media Responsibility Under the First Amendment." Guests included prominent members of Congress, officials of both the Reagan and Carter administrations, and a generous sampling of Washington's TV-star journalists. The political spectrum stretched from moderate left to fire-breathing right. (Moon himself was in South Korea attending the Asian Games.) Aside from some paranoid anti-Soviet ravings from the floor, the event was about as sinister—and interesting—as a convention of insurance salesmen.

Perhaps no one in American history has ever been in a worse position to become another respected media mogul in the nation's capital and elder statesman of the extreme right-wing of the Republican Party. Less than a decade ago, the litany of charges against Sun Myung Moon and his Unification Church was lengthy and diverse. Not so long ago, the articles that appeared in the mass media about the Moon movement carried titles like "Bizarre Plot to Rule the World" (*San Francisco Examiner*), "Parents Fight Brainwashing by Bizarre Sect" (London *Daily Telegraph*), and the evocative, "I Was a Robot for Sun Myung Moon" (*Glamour*). A typical story on Moon and his followers, such as the *New York Times Magazine* cover story in May 1976, focused not on Moon's political beliefs or his commitment to freedom of the press, but on "the anguished parents who have lost their children to . . . this devil who enslaves young Americans by means of brainwashing and mind control."

Moon and Company were considerably less savvy about their public relations in those days. There were all those bright-eyed, clean-cut Moonie flower-peddlers in airports everywhere, prompting one *Time* writer in 1975 to recall the early Nazi days. The American Jewish Committee was particularly unenthusiastic. In 1976 Rabbi James Rubin accused the Unification Church of "seeking to reinfect the spiritual bloodstream of mankind with its cancerous version of contempt for Jews and Judaism." (A Moon spokesman replied, "If Jews had recognized Christ as the Messiah, he wouldn't have died.")

The horror stories of parents' kidnappings and "deprogramming" sessions with their children, inevitably followed by Moonie counterkidnappings and de-deprogramming sessions, also did the reverend's image no good whatsoever. Another big Moon story, the mass marriage ceremony at Madison Square Garden in July 1982—in which 2,000 couples, chosen at random by the reverend, were simultaneously joined in holy matrimony—only served to underscore Moon's image as some sort of demonic puppeteer.

Here we had a movement that combined brainwashing techniques out of Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* with the communal ideals of Walden Pond. (Some psychologists speculate that Moon appropriated the techniques of North Korean communists who held him prisoner after World War II.) Moon's movement was aimed directly at the hearts and minds of American youth. An ever-increasing army of thousands of American middle-class children put themselves in the service of a weird Korean who said that he wished "to conquer and subjugate the world." To his followers he explained, "I am your brain. What I wish, must be your wish," and "I want to have the members under me even though they may have to disobey their own parents and the presidents of their nations."

A 1978 HOUSE subcommittee report in the wake of the "Koreagate" scandal noted with some alarm the myriad connections between the Unification Church and Korean security and intelligence forces. The subcommittee concluded that Moon's church aimed at creating a global theocracy under Moon's control. The report quoted Moon as saying, "If we manipulate seven nations at least . . . the U.S., England, France, Germany, Soviet Russia and maybe Korea and Japan . . . then we can get a hold of the whole world." As for Moon, the disinterested defender of freedom of the press, the report described what was then Moon's only English-language paper in this country, the *New York City Tribune*, as "a propaganda instrument for the Moon organization" employed to "attack and discredit" Moon's many detractors.

Barely seven years later, Moon the dangerous lunatic has been supplanted by Moon the beneficent if rather muddle-

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headed grandfather with unimaginably deep pockets. When Moon emerged from his year-long tax-evasion sentence in the summer of 1985, he somehow seemed to leave his Jim Jones image back in prison. The Unification Church launched an extensive and expensive newspaper campaign portraying Moon as a victim of anti-Asian prejudice and a martyr for his higher cause. Moon's release was celebrated not only by political allies on the far right, but also a smattering of civil rights leaders and religious leaders from mainstream Jewish and Christian organizations, all of whom have an interest in defending the Moon church's rather liberal accounting methods. (See "New Moon" by Michael Isikoff, TNR, August 26, 1985.) Senator Orrin Hatch lauded Moon for providing American youth with—seriously—"a religious alternative to Communism."

Even Unification Church officials were surprised at the level of acceptance to which they were treated upon Moon's release. Mose Durst, president of the U.S. branch of Moon's church, exclaimed, "In one year, we've moved from being pariahs to being part of the mainstream." At the media conference Bo Hi Pak, a top Moonie executive, went so far as to place Moon in the company of Jesus Christ, Saints Peter and Paul, Roger Williams, Joseph Smith, and Martin Luther King Jr. on the all-star team of religious martyrdom. This despite the fact that the Unification Church remains the only "Christian" church ever to be rejected for membership in the National Council of Churches.

WHAT HAPPENED? First and foremost was the founding of Newsworld Communications, the Moonie-owned media conglomerate, which reportedly has dispersed hundreds of millions of dollars to journalists, scholars, and various right-wing fanatics in the past five years. When Moon began his media-mogul era, through Newsworld's sponsorship of the *Washington Times* in 1982, the city's journalistic establishment reacted with a mixture of bemusement with Moon himself and awe at the idea of a publisher who appeared ready to sink well over $100 million into a newspaper without any regard whatsoever to its future profitability. An alarm bell was sounded in, of all places, *Washington Dossier*, a society magazine whose editor at the time was a deprogrammed ex-Moonie. But the article, entitled "Forewarned is Forearmed: The Moon Menace Comes to Town," failed to excite.

Today the *Times* has achieved a kind of, well, cult-like following. The perception of the *Times* as a "Moonie paper" continues to hold down citywide circulation, and the accusation by outgoing editor James Whelan in 1984 that the paper was "firmly in the hands of the Unification Church" still rankles. But the popularity of the paper with a small coterie of administration leakers and New Right strategists has made it harder for the slightly larger coterie of Washington journalists to ignore, however strong their distaste for its politics or ownership might be.

The church's newsweekly, *Insight*, and its most recent endeavor, the glossy, 700-page monthly intellectual journal bearing the pretentious title *The World and I*, have yet to make any appreciable impact on anything but the bank accounts of Moon and his employees. According to the editor and publisher of *The World and I*, Morton Kaplan, a distinguished political scientist from the University of Chicago, its annual budget stands at $10 million, a phenomenal figure for a highbrow publication.

THREE QUESTIONS stand out above all others when considering the phenomenon of Sun Myung Moon, the Korean Rupert Murdoch: Where did all this money come from? What exactly is Moon trying to buy with it? And, is he succeeding?

Moon's fortune apparently originated in his days as a businessman in Korea. Once he went into the deity business, the flower-peddlers, each collecting $75 to $100 a day, supplemented his income nicely. Today his financial empire consists of at least 150 businesses in the United States, including Newsworld Communications, real estate holdings, manufacturing concerns, fishing fleets, and who knows what else. There are also reputed connections to banks in Paraguay and a mysterious cabal of Japanese businessmen. Countless journalists have hurled themselves into investigating this inpenetrable organizational maze and come away baffled about where the money actually comes from.

Dinesh D'Souza, managing editor of the conservative Heritage Foundation journal *Policy Review*, wrote an article on Moon in 1984 that illustrated what was still a powerful ambivalence on the right regarding the reverend's riches. D'Souza thinks that conservatives ought to be leery of allowing their livelihood to depend upon Moon's generosity. "What I can't figure out," D'Souza says, "is whether Moon is trying to purchase respectability for his theology or whether he wants to jettison the theology in order to purchase respectability for himself."

D'Souza's interpretation of Moon's motivations is very similar to that of liberals like William Greider and David Warsh, both of whom were panelists at the Shoreham conference. (Greider is national editor for *Rolling Stone*, and Warsh is a columnist for the *Boston Globe*.) Both men seem to think that the generous honoraria they received were in the service of Moon's efforts to buy greater respectability for himself and his movement. Warsh appeared genuinely to regret his role in this. To Greider, Moon is just another "ideologue trying to buy a place in the American political dialogue." No worse, in his view, than AEI or the Heritage Foundation.

Some conservatives appear ready to go the distance with Moon. While carefully disavowing his theology, they maintain that his efforts are altruistic ones, dedicated as he claims, to furthering democracy and world peace. Midge Decter, a neoconservative writer and editor who chaired a panel on terrorism at the media conference, insisted that "Moon would not sponsor, at great cost to himself, a conference such as this merely to make himself respectable. The purpose of the sponsorship by the Reverend Moon of conferences and publications and many other things is to further freedom." Morton Kaplan thinks Moon is moti-

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vated by certain "inspirations" he experiences, one of which was responsible for the founding of the magazine Kaplan now edits. Moon is dedicated, in his view, not so much to fighting communists as to changing their hearts.

The simplest theory about Moon's motivations has been nearly forgotten: that he really meant what he was saying way back when. In this view, Moon still aims to "conquer and subjugate the world" and has chosen the Reagan administration and its supporters as his primary vehicle. When you consider that the world has only two superpowers, and that it is a great deal easier to start a newspaper in this one, then such a strategy would make sense for an extremely patient man who happens to be convinced that he is the Messiah.

The current interpretation of Moon is more benign. Greider and Warsh as well as Decter and Kaplan believe that Moon has dropped—for reasons known only to himself—the theological aspects of his "crusade for God" in favor of the political crusade against the Soviet Union and world communism. Moon, it is believed, is just another well-heeled, anti-communist eccentric, like Richard Mellon Scaife, the zillionaire owner of the *Sacramento Union*, or Joseph Coors, the beer magnate and founder of the Heritage Foundation. Moon too is merely using his millions to buy himself a seat on Washington's ideological stock market. Moon's defenders like to point to the example of the Christian Scientists as an unorthodox sect that publishes a well-respected newspaper without everyone questioning their true motives or secret plans. The comparison may require a leap of faith, but in a city where money talks, people are jumping.

ERIC ALTERMAN

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Our 'democratic revolution' in El Salvador.

THE TERRORIST AND THE INDIAN

BY JEFFERSON MORLEY

ONCE THE SOURCE of horrific stories about political killing and of fierce political debate, El Salvador is now a source of hope for American politicians. The civil war that has wracked this small Central American country of five million mostly poor people for the last seven years is said to be ending with a victory for the forces of democracy. Liberal Democrats jostle with conservative Republicans to have their pictures taken with President Jose Napoléon Duarte, the champion of his country's "democratic revolution." By contrast, the few people skeptical about the substance of this foreign policy triumph sound querulous and petty.

But if El Salvador is a showcase for the "good intentions" of the United States, it is worth considering what these intentions have wrought for Salvadorans. The best way to do this is to look at the case of two representative Salvadorans, both of whom are leaders in institutions influential in the life of their country. Neither is named Duarte, neither speaks much English, and neither will ever get many meetings with congressmen. But their story, as much as anybody's, is the story of "democratic revolution."

Adrián Esquino Lisco is a five-foot tall, round-faced Indian from the rolling lowlands of western El Salvador who, like his campesino followers, wears a straw hat everywhere. He is the head of the National Association of Indigenous Salvadorans (ANIS), the organization of El Salvador's Indian minority. Like the Miskito Indians in Nicaragua, El Salvador's Indians are independent, proud, and scorned. Esquino's political life is devoted to resurrecting and preserving the culture of his people. The Indians recall all too well the infamous Matanza, the massacre of 1932. In crushing a Communist-influenced popular rebellion, the Salvadoran army massacred thousands of peasants. Determined to prevent any repetition of the Matanza, Esquino has for years put the well-being of the Indians ahead of all other political goals. When others called for armed rebellion, for example, he maintained respectful relations with Salvadoran military officers.

Elmer González Araujo is a career military officer who has served in posts throughout El Salvador. He does not enjoy high standing among his peers. His fellow officers cite several instances in which the country's leftist guerrillas have inflicted embarrassing defeats on military posts commanded by González.

The lives of Esquino and González became intertwined with U.S. policy on the morning of February 22, 1983. That was the day González ordered one of his junior officers to take 200 soldiers into the village of Las Hojas, where a number of Esquino's followers live. Informants wearing hoods picked out people to be taken away, hands tied behind their backs. Over the next four hours at least 18 people were executed, and, according to the U.S. Embassy,

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"trusted and reliable sources in the area" reported that "many more bodies" were found. All of the prisoners had been shot at close range. The villagers say that 74 of their fathers, brothers, and sons were killed.

After Esquino learned of the killings, he went to González. The colonel told him that the villagers who had been killed were "subversives." And in a sense they were. They didn't belong to the country's left-wing insurgency. (There had been virtually no guerrilla activity in the area.) But with the help of ANIS they had won a property dispute with a large local landowner. Such a legal victory—though compatible with American ideals of peaceful change—subverted the status quo of western El Salvador.

WITHIN A WEEK the U.S. Embassy knew that González was responsible. In a cable to Washington that has since been declassified, the embassy reported that González gave one of his junior officers a "list of campesino cooperative 'suspects' " and ordered the captain "to carry out the *operativo.*" According to the cable, another source also "confirmed that Araujo González [sic] was responsible for the direct order" to perpetrate the killings.

The Salvadoran armed forces publicly pledged a thorough investigation. "In El Salvador justice is always done," one top officer declared at a press conference, and the *New York Times* announced, "Salvador Regime Acts Swiftly to Investigate Slaying Report." The embassy, having heard such promises before, continued to press the case behind the scenes. According to another embassy cable, its No. 2 official told a top Salvadoran officer that "we along with others were reasonably certain as to what had transpired [at Las Hojas]. This is an opportunity for El Salvador to demonstrate to the world that it punishes wrongdoers no matter who they are." The officer agreed and promised to press the case.

González was then transferred to a highly desirable job. In mid-1983 he was named chairman of the Salvadoran military's procurement commission. Four months after the U.S. Embassy concluded that it was "reasonably certain" he was a mass murderer, González was consulting with U.S. military advisers on weapons purchases.

González was also getting involved in a plot to defraud the U.S. government. In July 1983 he approved spending $4.7 million in U.S. credits for the purchase of 18 million rounds of M-16 ammunition. In return, González and another officer in the Salvadoran Ministry of Defense would receive kickbacks from the supplier, a company called Nordac Manufacturing in Virginia. The trouble was, Nordac didn't have the ammunition. Instead of sending U.S.-made ammunition as the contract specified, Nordac's owners decided to ship inexpensive and inferior bullets made in Yugoslavia. Nordac would skim off the money saved by buying cheap bullets.

Meanwhile, in August 1983, Esquino was being reassured by the U.S. ambassador that "corrective action" would be taken. While he was waiting, the State Department sent its annual report on human rights to Congress on January 31, 1984. The report, approved by Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights Elliott Abrams, stated that the Las Hojas massacre had "apparently" been carried out "by elements of a Salvadoran army unit." The misleading implication was that the U.S. government wasn't reasonably certain what had happened at Las Hojas. The phrase "elements of the army," a standard administration device for absolving commanding officers of responsibility for political violence, further implied that González had not been involved.

It is objectively true that the State Department did a favor for the terrorist González. But it did so with only the best of intentions. The State Department wanted to make sure that El Salvador stayed on the path of "democratic revolution." According to the administration's policy, that goal depends upon making the Salvadoran military confident of U.S. backing. Fudging the truth about the Las Hojas massacre was just one small part of that effort.

Colonel González was faring well on other fronts as well. The Nordac ammunition had begun to arrive in El Salvador; it was time for his payoff. U.S. prosecutors in Virginia have since developed a detailed account of the scam, and the owners of Nordac have admitted that it is accurate. The prosecutors say that in March 1984, one of the owners of Nordac went to San Salvador carrying $50,000 in cash, at least part of which was intended for González. At around this time, though, Salvadoran military commanders began to notice their soldiers were dying with jammed M-16s in their hands. The Nordac ammunition, its seems, was to blame.

Esquino continued to struggle within the Salvadoran political system to get justice. The labor federation, of which ANIS was a member, had hammered out an agreement with Jose Napoléon Duarte, the Christian Democratic Party candidate for president. Duarte pledged to pursue dialogue to end the country's civil war and to prosecute human rights abuses, including the Las Hojas massacre. In return, Esquino and his fellow labor leaders promised to line up their constituents behind Duarte in the May 1984 presidential election. By all accounts, the agreement, known as the Social Pact, was instrumental in Duarte's victory.

ESQUINO WAS THEN dealt another blow by the Americans supportive of the notion of "democratic revolution." This time it didn't have anything to do with the Las Hojas massacre, but with Esquino's leadership of his peasant organization. Esquino's group belongs to the Salvadoran labor federation, known as the Popular Democratic Unity (UPD), which was supported by funding from the AFL-CIO through the U.S. government. The AFL-CIO program in El Salvador is part of its effort to encourage free and independent labor movements around the world. It is also a semiofficial wing of the Reagan administration's effort to "build democratic institutions" as a means of advancing U.S. foreign policy goals.

But when Esquino and some of his fellow labor leaders

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started acting independently in August 1984, the AFL-CIO wasn't pleased. A UPD leader publicly criticized Duarte for reneging on his promise to pursue peace talks with the guerrillas. The UPD's American patrons, who backed Duarte without reservation, were furious. Within a month, the AFL-CIO's operatives in El Salvador announced the creation of a new Salvadoran labor federation in which the UPD would only be a subsidiary. "Why do we need another organization when we've struggled for three long years to build the UPD and have finally attained unity?" Esquino said. "Why fix something that isn't broke?" AFL-CIO operatives in El Salvador say that the new federation had been in the works for six months.

Reporters from the *Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal* would later conclude that the AFL-CIO's heavy-handed manipulation shattered the unity of the Salvadoran labor movement. J. Michael Luhan, a free-lance writer, provided a detailed account of what happened in the Spring 1986 issue of *Dissent.* The AFL-CIO disputes these reports, but no one denies that the United States policy lost a friend—Esquino—in the process.

Part of the problem was that Esquino was getting precious little reward from American policy. In December 1984, charges against two of the junior officers who carried out the Las Hojas massacre were dismissed for lack of evidence. (González, of course, had never been charged.) In January Esquino and other Salvadoran labor leaders implored the AFL-CIO in Washington to change its policies. The "absolutely shameful" actions of American labor officials threatened "the democratic process of El Salvador," Esquino and the others said. The letter was never answered, and AFL-CIO officials later admitted that the independence shown by Esquino and his fellow labor leaders was precisely the reason they had been dumped. One told the *Miami Herald* that the UPD had played "a useful role," but was now "off to the left of Duarte."

ON THE SECOND anniversary of the massacre in February 1985, Esquino said that he was losing hope of ever obtaining justice. The following year would do little to change his mind. The State Department's annual human rights reports said nothing about Las Hojas, and proclaimed that "there has been substantial progress in the past year [on human rights abuses]." In July a Salvadoran court dismissed charges against the ten remaining low-level participants in the massacre. Duarte had formed a commission to investigate the Las Hojas massacre and other prominent cases of political assassinations, but it accomplished nothing. In November 1985 it was abolished.

Even the emerging details of the Nordac case could not dislodge González. Senior officials of the Salvadoran government and military were personally briefed by U.S. prosecutors on the Nordac case—and on González's alleged involvement it. Duarte, the nominal commander in chief of the Salvadoran military, still did not attempt to discipline González in any way.

Last spring things got even worse for Esquino. The AFL-CIO and Freedom House, an independent human rights organization, began insinuating in April that he is a Marxist-Leninist guerrilla. The two organizations cited captured guerrilla documents that outlined the rebels' strategy for gaining influence and control within the Salvadoran labor movement. Their report, "Guerrilla Penetration of Salvadoran Labor Unions," cited Esquino by name, and concluded that "some of those who profess to be authentic trade unionists are something else entirely."

The trouble is, the documents themselves disprove the allegations. In one of the few passages where Esquino is mentioned, the guerrillas concluded flatly that "there are no possibilities of infiltrating" Esquino's organization, adding that Esquino himself had "not shown any commitment to the [guerrillas]." Esquino could not be bought—not by the Americans, not by the guerrillas.

AFL-CIO OFFICIALS will no doubt insist that anybody who deals with the guerrillas is no friend of U.S. policy. But before Esquino is consigned to the status of "enemy of democracy," Americans might try to understand why Esquino did what he did. For years he has gone out of his way to accommodate U.S. policy. He supported Duarte—even though Duarte supported the U.S. policy of providing generous military aid to the same army that massacred his friends. His followers earn perhaps $150 a year and cannot live on the goodwill of Americans who praise them for shunning the guerrillas. If, for his patience and independence, Esquino is rewarded with contempt, then U.S. policy would seem to have little room for its ostensible beneficiaries.

As for González, no U.S. or Salvadoran government official has ever been unhappy enough about his indiscretions to rebuke him publicly. Of course, Reagan administration officials and President Duarte are exasperated—privately—that González ordered the murder of 74 innocent people and contributed to the deaths of an unknown number of Salvadoran soldiers fighting on behalf of U.S. policy. They are also unhappy that he stole the Pentagon's money. When prosecutors in the Nordac case forced the three Americans involved in the Nordac scam to plead guilty this summer, the State Department called in the leader of the Salvadoran armed forces for a secret meeting. The evidence showing that González and the other officer had stolen the Pentagon's money was again presented. On August 23 a Salvadoran military spokesman told the *Washington Post* that the charges against the two officers were a "dirty maneuver in the United States," and said there was no plans to prosecute either officer. The conservative truism that good intentions might not be enough has never seemed more appropriate.

Postscript: In late September Elmer González Araujo, perhaps emboldened by the AFL-CIO's insinuations, went on Salvadoran TV to denounce Adrián Esquino Lisco as a guerrilla. González, who continues to hold a high military position, added that the Las Hojas massacre was a justified and "professional" military operation. □

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The trouble with NPR.

ALL THINGS DISTORTED

BY FRED BARNES

NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO is crazy about anniversaries. In September NPR took solemn note of the 50th anniversary of the publication of *Ferdinand the Bull*, the children's story about a pacifist bull. A few years ago, it observed the 30th anniversary of the American-backed coup in Guatemala. The 20th anniversary of the Free Speech Movement at the University of California at Berkeley got full treatment. So did the 40th anniversary of the American bombing of Dresden, the 20th anniversary of the death of Malcolm X, the 25th anniversary of the Communist revolution in Cuba, the 50th anniversary of the founding of a socialist town in Alaska, the second anniversary of a peasant massacre in Guatemala, and the 12th anniversary of the founding of Sweet Honey in the Rock, a feminist singing group. The 30th anniversary of the death of actor James Dean (*Rebel Without a Cause*) was observed in 1985. So was the 31st this year.

Yes, NPR has a style all its own, and it's one that seems to be catching on as a national broadcast fixture. Its two daily news shows, "Morning Edition" and "All Things Considered," have a combined audience of two million people each day. In a given week, ten million folks will listen to NPR news at one time or other. (Its weekly audience in Washington, D.C., is gauged at 300,000.) About 250 stations carry NPR shows, and every major media market except San Antonio, Texas, is covered. Once beset by a staggering budget deficit, its very existence in doubt, NPR has thrived under Douglas Bennett, who was a senior State Department official during the Carter administration. He took over as NPR president in 1983, the same year NPR was forced to borrow $7 million from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to pay its bills. In September that loan was paid off with a final $230,000 check. Now the sky's the limit, Bennett says. "If we handle ourselves right, we're going to wind up as the leading radio network in the country."

That's the good news about NPR. The bad news is that its news coverage is palpably slanted. True, NPR has some fine reporters: Cokie Roberts and Linda Wertheimer on Capitol Hill, Jim Angle at the White House, Nina Totenberg at the Supreme Court. And there is plenty of straight coverage, even some eye-popping scoops, such as NPR's exclusive report on warnings by Morton Thiokol engineers of grave risks in the Challenger launch last January. But when NPR goes beyond breaking news, as it does in lengthy background pieces, cultural reports, interviews by anchors, and commentaries, the left-wing agenda dominates. NPR devotes lavish coverage to human rights abuses and other sins of the Nicaraguan *contras* while all but ignoring abuses by the Sandinista regime. Dark stories about a resurgent ultraright in America get high priority, as do pieces on radical feminism and homosexual rights. Oh, yes, the anniversaries. Last March, for example, the third anniversary of President Reagan's Star Wars speech was used to drub the strategic defense program.

All this would be fine, of course, if NPR were entirely supported by its listeners, and didn't claim to present balanced news. Who complains about the small, left-wing Pacifica radio network? It relies on listener contributions and is unabashed about its political tilt. At NPR the goal is "fairness, accuracy, timeliness," says news director Robert Siegel, and federal funds foot much of the bill. In 1986 NPR got $12 million from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, about half its annual budget. This year NPR will get slightly more. The use of taxpayers' money has given Accuracy in Media, the conservative watchdog group, a springboard to criticize NPR. Another critic is John Colas, a former researcher for the Defense Department who has twice debated Siegel on the question of NPR's bias. Colas has monitored NPR for three years, amassing transcripts and analytical data, and he made his research available for this article.

The most tangible, and easily corrected, form of bias in reporting is in unfair labeling. You know, calling conservatives "ultraconservatives" and liberals "activists." NPR revels in unfair labeling. The left goes label-free, the right is stigmatized. Roger Wilkins of the leftist Institute for Policy Studies is a "senior fellow at a Washington think tank." Public Citizen, a liberal lobbying group, is "a public interest organization." The Washington Office on Latin America, which is fervently pro-Sandinista, becomes "a human rights group." Philip Stern, a left-wing philanthropist, is "a writer specializing in education living in Washington." On the other hand, the American Enterprise Institute is a "conservative Washington-based think tank," the Heritage Foundation "a New Right think tank." The Rockford Institute is "conservative," the Eagle Forum a "conservative women's group." In long pieces last March attacking Reagan's rationale for aiding the *contras*, Bill Buzenberg, NPR's State Department correspondent, interviewed Robert Leiken, a Central American expert for the Carnegie Endowment, always noting Leiken's support for the *contras*. Other interviewees, with one exception, were not pigeonholed on the issue. They were critical of Reagan's policy.

The Buzenberg pieces were classics in the NPR style, gut jobs on a conservative policy that purported to be careful,

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objective reports. They were billed as examinations of "the evidence behind the arguments for assisting the anti-Sandinista rebels." But rather than sift evidence, Buzenberg simply mustered the case against Reagan's contention that the Sandinistas are a threat to the United States, to Central America, and to their own people. Heck, nobody thinks Sandinista tanks are going to roll into Honduras or Costa Rica, he said, and concluded that the Sandinista military buildup is defensive. (Buzenberg was knocking down a straw man. The Sandinistas subvert their neighbors by aiding leftist guerrillas, not by sending in tanks.) Reagan's insistence that the Sandinistas are expansionist is "a matter of conjecture" at best. "So the Sandinista human rights record is not good," he went on. "But analysts say the administration sometimes exaggerates its case." Rhetorical excess becomes worse than human rights abuses. When the International League for Human Rights last summer issued a report on repression in Nicaragua, NPR ignored the story. It also failed to report on press conferences in Washington and New York conducted by Bishop Vega, the second-ranking Catholic prelate in Nicaragua, who was exiled by the Sandinistas.

ONE WAY OF assessing the fairness of NPR's coverage of Nicaragua is to compare it with their coverage of another repressive Latin American country, Chile. On the seventh anniversary of the Sandinista takeover last July, NPR's stringer in Managua, Alan Tomlinson, blamed the *contras* for most of Nicaragua's troubles. "The war has shattered the Nicaraguan economy," he said. "The damage inflicted by the *contras* exceeds what the country earns in three years from its exports." He cited 1,800 imprisoned "counterrevolutionaries," but raised no questions about human rights or the shutdown of *La Prensa*, the only opposition newspaper in Nicaragua. That same day, Julia Preston of the *Washington Post* was interviewed on NPR, mostly about how much the Nicaraguan people feared the *contras*.

In other reports, Tomlinson has mentioned *La Prensa*. On June 27 he noted that it "has long been a thorn in the side of the Sandinistas. Despite censorship, it has constantly criticized the government, rarely having anything constructive to say about its policies. Its headlines have frequently reflected an American view of regional affairs which has deeply angered the Sandinistas." Given this, why shouldn't they shut down *La Prensa*? The next day, interviewed on NPR's "Weekend Edition," Tomlinson reported that the closing of *La Prensa* wouldn't be unpopular. "It mainly circulates in the capital and some of the main provincial capitals," he said. "Since most Nicaraguans, by far the majority, don't read—certainly don't read well enough to read a newspaper—then the paper's absence on the streets is not going to be massively missed by the huge majority of Nicaraguan people." The obvious follow-up question was: Nicaraguans can't read? What happened to the ballyhooed literacy campaign of the Sandinistas? NPR didn't ask. Instead, Tomlinson concluded: "The majority of Nicaraguans . . . are generally still very strongly behind the Sandinista revolution and behind [President Daniel] Ortega's view of things." He cited no poll or survey to buttress his assessment of majority opinion in Nicaragua.

The 13th anniversary of General Augosto Pinochet's military coup in Chile was a different story. On September 11 Shirley Christian of the *New York Times* noted in an interview that the new state of emergency included a crackdown on the Catholic Church and moderate politicians. Six magazines were shut down, two foreign news agencies forbidden to send out stories. Rightly enough, no apology for this was offered, no guess that only a few Chileans would really mind. Even moderate military officers have been silenced, Christian said. NPR's interviewer asked about "right-wing death squads" backing Pinochet. Then came more segments dealing with "an escalation of internal control" and a "death squad type slaying" of a left-wing journalist. The editor of a suppressed magazine was interviewed sympathetically. So was Hortensia Allende, the wife of slain leader Salvador Allende.

TO PUSH ITS anti-Reagan position on Latin America, NPR has few compunctions about what stringers it should use or what kinds of stories it should broadcast. As recently as July 29, NPR used Anthony Avirgan for a critical report about the *contras*. Avirgan's views on the *contras* are well-known. Last May he filed a $23.8 million civil suit against *contra* leader Adolfo Calero and some of his American backers. Avirgan alleged that they had plotted the assassination of rival *contra* leader Eden Pastora in 1984, the year Pastora was hurt in an explosion that also injured Avirgan. In his reports for NPR, Avirgan has blamed the *contras* for nearly every ill in Central America, including a plan to assassinate Lewis Tambs, the American ambassador to Costa Rica. Tambs has denied there was any assassination plot.

NPR's cleverest trick is to use arts coverage for political purposes. Last year it interviewed a Canadian folk singer whose only claim to fame was his support for the Sandinistas. The Sandinista government isn't perfect, he said, but neither is Canada's. He performed his own song with the catchy refrain, "Don't let them stop you, Nicaragua." On September 12 NPR also interviewed a member of the Chad Mitchell Trio, a just-revived 1960s folk group, who had returned from Nicaragua after a "fact-finding" trip. He sounded impressed with what he saw there. A month earlier, Judy Collins was lionized on the 25th anniversary of her first recording. Her eyes, NPR's reporter said, are "a vivid, vibrant blue that only the hand of Pablo Picasso could have mixed on his most inspired day." Collins has "sung against the war in Vietnam, for the control of handguns, against nuclear power, in favor of ERA," etc. She even had dinner recently with President Ortega of Nicaragua, questioning him about "suppression of free expression." But the NPR reporter didn't ask about Collins's session with Ortega, inquiring instead about the "personal statement of her pride in her new body" made by posing nude on her album cover.

NPR is willing to stretch the definition of art to get in a piece with sharp political overtones. Last July it covered a

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show at an obscure Washington museum of drawings by children who are refugees from El Salvador, hardly a big event on the arts circuit. The drawings were notable for their grisly content and political message, one critical of the U.S.-backed government of El Salvador. Government soldiers were shown beheading children. In one picture there was a caption quoting a soldier. "Shut up, you whores. You are guerrilla wives. Sharpen those machetes for the heads of these women."

There's a reason for so much NPR coverage of Central America. The network gets "dedicated" foundation money to finance specific reporting. Bennett insists that NPR only seeks money for coverage that it has already decided is appropriate, such as covering last year's United Nations conference on women more extensively that any broadcast outfit in the world. "That was an expression of our news judgment," Bennett says. "We wanted to give special attention." NPR has decided against giving special attention to the Middle East, though occasional pieces from stringers are used. Coverage from there is too controversial, says Siegel. "No matter what we did—if we went for a large grant from an oil company or from a company identified with Jewish ownership—it wouldn't be worth it."

Not that the few Middle East segments NPR uses are straight news reporting. One report last August began with this teaser from an unidentified male: "Health conditions are terrible. Infant mortality is very high. If there's a time bomb, it is in Gaza, not in the West Bank because compared to the West Bank, Gaza is hell." This was followed by a report from stringer Deborah Amos, who described Gaza as "the Soweto of the state of Israel." Jerry Cheslow, a stringer in Israel, reported about the same time on the Black Hebrews, a group of blacks from the United States that has fraudulently claimed Israeli citizenship. Although not overly sympathetic, Cheslow's report lacked the hard critical edge that is NPR's style.

Perhaps the most popular step that President Reagan has taken in 1986—popular with Americans, at any rate—was the April bombing of Libya. It was not popular with NPR. In the days before and after the attack, NPR was brimming with interviews and commentaries to the effect that a tough response to Muammar Qaddafi wouldn't work. Commentator Rod MacLeish likened the bombing to the Bay of Pigs. Of particular interest to NPR was whether the Reagan administration had violated the edict against assassination of foreign leaders by trying to kill Qaddafi in the raid. Somewhere in Massachusetts, NPR found a fellow named Rob Okun, who delivered a searing commentary on behalf of Qaddafi's daughter who, the Libyans claimed, was killed in the bombing. "I speak out for the babies, the children, those who have no say in this boy's escalating battle," said Okun. He said he was trying "to focus on just one image: it is a baby girl asleep in her crib, dreaming of nursing mother, absently sucking away.... Maybe if I concentrate hard enough, Nancy and Ronald Reagan in the privacy of their White House bedroom will see her just as the bomb strikes." Okun's grief piece, with its implication that Reagan is a baby killer, was a one-of-a-kind commentary. NPR will certainly want to invite Okun back next year on the first anniversary of the bombing.

Bourgeois communism as a way of life.

HUNGARIAN HERESY

BY WILLIAM MCCORD

HUNGARY HAS LONG been a land of extraordinary anomalies. Thirty years ago this month its revolution (led not only by young intellectuals, students, and professionals who yearned for an open society, but also by monarchists and avowed fascists) was aborted when Soviet armored divisions rolled in, overthrew Imre Nagy, and installed János Kádár. Twenty-five thousand Hungarians were killed and 150,000 wounded. When Kádár took over, according to official Party statements, he could count on the support of no more than five percent of the population. Now he is the most popular Eastern European leader. Dissidents openly criticize the government, risking fines and harassment but not their lives. Competitive elections have deposed Communist candidates, including a former prime minister, and resulted in the defeat of Party-sponsored tax initiatives. Religious instruction in the schools is subsidized by the regime at the rate of $1.6 million a year, and over 50 percent of Hungarians describe themselves as Catholic. There are no posters in Budapest celebrating Kádár's virtues, but there is a plaque in Karl Marx Square memorializing the achievements of Imre Nagy.

The continuing contradictions within Hungary—as well as the dazzling changes—are no more apparent than in the economic transformations wrought by "Kádárism." From a base ravaged by war, fascism, and feudalism Kádár has created a prosperous society where the peasants, usually

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the pariahs of a Marxist regime, have advanced more than any other class. While retaining the rhetoric of Marxism, Hungary's leaders have initiated the "New Economic Mechanism," which abandons most of the classic tenets of a command economy and grants a high degree of autonomy to individual enterprises.

Since the mid-'60s the reformers have prompted a boom in private entrepreneurs, released 90 percent of companies from direct state control, and strongly encouraged peasant initiatives. The Party has opened a bond market, legalized the "gray economy," encouraged the formation of cooperatives driven by a search for profit, and placed the country at the disposal of market forces. The government still constructs five-year plans, but these follow rather than guide such market signals as prices, interest rates, and taxation levels. More than Yugoslavia or Dengist China, Hungary represents the most striking heresy in the world to Marxist orthodoxy.

THE GLITTERING lures of Budapest's Skala cooperative are the most obvious manifestation of Hungary's economic "miracle." This 66-store group overtook the government-owned Centrum chain this year and has become Hungary's largest retail organization. Founded in 1976 by 200 consumer organizations, the air-conditioned Skala stores offer appliances, fresh fruits and juices, piped music, Italian shoes, Japanese stereos, Hungarian clothes, and services such as hairdressing and dry cleaning. No grander than a Sears in Peoria or a Debenhams in Liverpool, Skala is a splendor in Eastern Europe.

The Skala co-op sells twice as much as government outlets, buys directly from producers, reinvests its own profits, and pays its employees 25 percent more than the average state wage. Managers receive premiums based on their performance. Skala has emerged as a producer by buying defunct state factories and turning them into efficient, low-cost suppliers. Pictures of Lenin decorate the walls of Skala's headquarters, but the cooperative functions as an aggressive capitalist firm. Rather than dreary queues at empty shelves there are loudspeakers announcing: "We draw your attention to the Prestige kitchenware in the basement at particularly low prices. . . ."

Hungarian consumers respond by spending $570 million a year in Skala co-ops—a large sum for a nation of 10.6 million people who, officially, earn an income per capita of $2,100 a year. But government figures hide the real earnings of many people who easily double their state wages by (legally) pursuing careers in the gray economy or (illicitly but universally) accepting "sliding money"—bribes for doing a job well.

Perhaps the least publicized but most promising development in Hungary's liberalized economy is the growth of "economic work communities" *within* state-owned industry. An EWC is essentially a group of workers who voluntarily start their own private enterprise but use state facilities in their work and sell back their products to the socialized factories that nominally employ them. Unlike Yugoslavia's tightly controlled system of self-management, an EWC functions as a genuine workers' enterprise, governing its own affairs, distributing its profits, hiring and firing employees at will. Tacitly encouraged by managers desperate for efficiency, welcomed by workers who are hungry for higher pay—and yet not totally legalized or even officially recognized by the state—the EWCs have reportedly quadrupled in size since their inception in 1983. In 1985 alone, they doubled their membership and moved into the core of Hungarian heavy industry.

The huge Ganz-Danubius shipyards illustrate how the EWCs operate. Ganz employs 80,000 workers in six factories that produce harbor equipment, sea-going cranes, tugboats, and even luxury yachts. This great company, a 150-year-old anomaly in landlocked Hungary, uses the Danube to ship out the world's biggest floating cranes, extremely powerful barges, and giant boilers. The company dominates the Eastern bloc and controls 70 percent of the market in such countries as Brazil.

Nonetheless, Ganz is undercapitalized and requires more than its present quota of 2,500 engineers. It cannot dismiss lazy workers, has little control over wages, and faces increasing competition from Third World producers. In a country devoid of natural resources and short on skilled labor, these are formidable handicaps. "We lack control over our profits, investments, and wages," Dr. Adam Angyal, Ganz's director, told me. "As a result, our productivity level is low and our technological sophistication is falling."

EWCs offered a partial solution to Ganz's problems. With tacit encouragement from Angyal, over 100 EWCs averaging 30 workers each formed within Ganz. The EWCs attract the most talented workers and arrange specific contracts with the Ganz management to produce better parts at a lower price. The workers use Ganz parts, Ganz machinery, and, presumably, official Ganz working time. Yet the company gains by producing more, better, and cheaper products.

Workers directly profit, too, by avoiding state wage limits. In an accounting gimmick, Ganz pays an EWC as a "production cost" rather than in wages. Members of an EWC can earn four times the average worker's income. Some people in the EWCs also said that they gained spiritually since they organized and governed their own community of work, set their own standards, and distributed their extra incomes in a comradely fashion. "The EWC is the Hungarian future," one worker asserted. "It is true socialism."

THE REAL ECONOMIC fate of Hungary, however, may depend not so much on a huge Ganz complex as on what goes on in the rich countryside outside of Budapest. Hungary's villagers, still 50 percent of the population, cultivate more land per capita than any other people in Europe. Freed by Nagy in an early land reform, the peasants are remarkably productive. They feed their own population, export everything from delicious smoked hams to 12 million tons of wheat a year, and account for a major share of the government's current hard currency trade sur-

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plus of $607 million. Without the farmers, Hungary would never be able to pay the perpetually food-deprived U.S.S.R. for its imports, particularly of oil. (Russia is by far Hungary's largest trading partner, with an annual volume of some $5 billion.)

In a country whose soil is not particularly fertile, the Kádár government has devoted unusual attention to building viable agriculture. This concern—tangibly expressed in credit facilities, technical aid, and expert management—has paid off. Between the 1960s and 1980s, meat production increased by 100 percent, fruit by 130 percent, and cereals by 150 percent. Hungary's agricultural production now grows by three percent annually while other Eastern European countries show only decline.

Hungary's productive efficiency is unmatched in other nations, socialist or capitalist. In the last 20 years its yield of cereals per hectare shot up by 53 percent, America's increased by 20 percent, and Russia's declined by two percent. Hungary's grain yield is twice the world average, 78 percent more than the that of the United States, and ten percent greater than that of Denmark, a model agricultural nation.

Some of the reasons for the Hungarian achievement became apparent when I visited Granja, a typical rural cooperative 80 miles east of Budapest. Like most of Hungary's agricultural sector, Granja is a cooperative where half the land is privately tilled by individuals, the co-op members elect the commune's managers (who are nominated by the state) for five-year terms, and the farmers' council decides on investments, planting, and marketing of produce. The Granja cooperative, home to 3,000 members and 700 hired laborers, earns $4 million annually from mechanized wheat farming, cattle grazing, and even a small iron works.

Granja sells 60 percent of its products to state companies or other cooperatives, benefits from regional services such as a beef processing plant, accepts information and advice from the Ministry of Agriculture, and pays 50 percent of its cooperative profits in taxes. Yet the cooperative is basically an autonomous enterprise that supports local schools, owns a supermarket, finances a church and a theater, subsidizes holidays for its members, and freely elects its own "council of leaders." The residents of Granja retain their private profits, split up dividends from the cooperative, and, if the cooperative were ever mismanaged, would share the joint fate of bankruptcy. "It's a good system," one of the peasant leaders told me. "We eat well. We produce more. It satisfies a man's pride. We're our own bosses."

THE ACHIEVEMENTS of a Granja, the Ganz EWCs, and the Skala cooperatives have measurably increased the welfare of Hungarians. Life expectancy is now 66 for men and 74 for women, 99 percent of the people are literate, and 90 percent of 16-year-olds finish eight grades of school. In economist Clark Kerr's measure of a country's physical welfare—a sensitive combination of literacy, infant mortality, and life expectancy—Hungary scores 91. That is not far behind the most highly rated country on the index, Sweden at 97, and is ahead of Yugoslavia's 84. It is not far behind the United States, at 94.

NEVERTHELESS, Hungary is no utopia—by socialist or any other standards. Inequality is still pervasive: white-collar workers are twice as likely to receive superior hospital treatment, and their children have 12 times the chance of winning a university diploma. The richer classes can more easily afford the *bakshish* demanded by doctors in order to perform 60 percent of operations. Some sociologists believe that the top five percent of the population earns 80 times more than the bottom five percent.

And whatever the reforms since 1956, Hungary is still a Leninist society with a vigilant secret police. The Hungarian Communist Party retains control of the official press, forbids criticism of the U.S.S.R. and Hungary's basic socialist order in the domestic press and classrooms, oversees the appointment of politically reliable managers to places like Ganz and Granja, and generally "organizes and guides the people in their struggle to construct a socialist society."

But there is some hope that other social changes may be stimulated within Hungary along with those taking place in the "second economy." Elemer Hankiss, a prominent sociologist at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, believes that a "second society" is already blossoming, pointing to the emergence of private associations, environmental clubs of "green" orientation, farmers' unions, writers' circles, and local political groupings that sometimes challenge the regime and its ideology. Foreign journals freely circulate on newsstands, readers can find books of virtually all political persuasions in the library of Karl Marx University, and officials invariably begin conversations with the (almost true) preface, "I'll answer any question you wish. There's no secrecy here." Samizdat publications reach 10,000 readers with each issue, and treat taboo subjects such as poverty in Hungary and faults within the Soviet bloc. Finally, a number of openly critical associations have sprung up in recent years, ranging from the New Leftist communes sponsored by the "Budapest school" (sociologists who argue that humanistic Marxism has been betrayed) to the Peace Group for Dialogue, which blames both East and West for the arms race. Members of such movements may come from within the regime as well as from without, and they are not treated as social outcasts.

Because of the 1956 trauma, both the dissidents and the government abstain from a violent resolution of social and political conflicts. "Society is slowly awakening to the fact that people can do something for themselves," says Hankiss. "Lip-service to ideology has virtually gone and repressive ideology has certainly gone." Hungarians of all persuasions believe that the economic reforms have encouraged pluralistic tendencies, and that the nature of the new society precludes a reversion to violent coercion. No one anticipates a return to absolute despotism. Nor, unfortunately, does anyone predict that Hungary will escape the grasp of Soviet domination. Yet just possibly, Hungary could be the first country to evolve internally into an open society from the cocoon of communism. □

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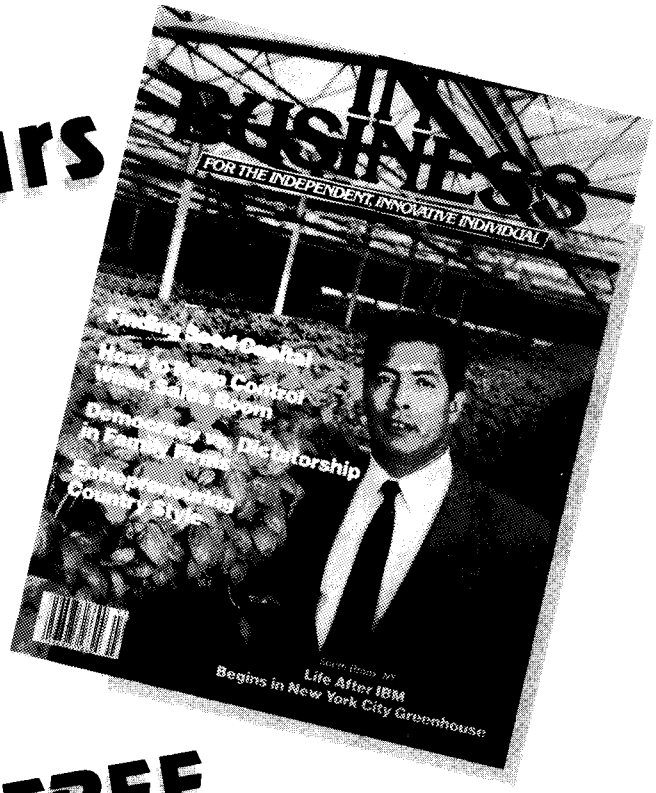

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Questions of Existence

All the advance facts about *Sid and Nancy* were unpromising. A biographical film—"docudrama" was the term flung about—of the English punk rocker Sid Vicious and his American girlfriend Nancy Spungen; the punk scene of the late 1970s; the concurrent drug scene; Sid's murder of Nancy in New York and his subsequent death of a drug overdose.

Sid and Nancy
(Samuel Goldwyn)

In proof, all these facts accurately describe the picture, but only factually: in quality, it turns out to be quite the opposite of sweaty exploitation. *Sid and Nancy* is hard yet compassionate, grueling yet imaginative, with two well-realized central characters, not two pop myths or two assemblages of data or two pat TV-epic symbols of social disorder. One of the reasons Sid and Nancy hold us is that, all the way down their sordid descent, they have some sense of self-created fate. They are knowing yet helpless victims of their own oppression.

The project began with the director, Alex Cox, an Oxonian who attended the UCLA film school. Cox's first feature was *Repo Man* (a man who repossesses cars on which money is due), which was itself a dim promise for his next work. *Repo Man* was made to be a cult film. This cult is the audience of the young and less young who want heavily stylized films of near-camp grotesqueries that the viewer can simultaneously soak in and patronize. (*Blue Velvet* is a current example.) Since I'm not a member of the cult, *Repo Man* was for me an adequately made bore. *Sid and Nancy* has none of that precious appeal for coterie support. It's a film of intense realism with its realism heightened by surreal touches. There are nightmares and fantasies, but the veristic material is so acutely understood and rendered that the verism, too, becomes nightmare.

With Abbe Wool, another product of the UCLA school, Cox wrote a script that is like a passage through a circle of hell, all the more infernal because it is earthly. Nothing is done to "explain" Sid and Nancy. We know from his accent that he is a cockney. We're told that she is American, a groupie who has come to London because of another rock star and who then meets Sid. Later, they visit her family somewhere in America, but this doesn't explain Nancy (especially since her family views her as a total loss). The pair meet in the middle of whirling, noisy glitz; they love and fight and wreck themselves with drugs; then he kills her and subsequently kills himself. Their existence, almost in the manner of medieval morality plays, is taken as the explanation of their existence.

A few slow-motion touches intrude. (Money floats through the air a couple of times to symbolize the passage of time and Sid's success.) A few fast-forward touches also intrude, for weird comedy. But, overwhelmingly, Cox has written and directed with distinction and with courage: he faces squarely all the platitudes in this kind of story and vitalizes them with his insistence that these two are not stock items from another drugs-and-rock saga. John Seale, the cinematographer, sees the wry side of all the parvenu luxury, and also sees the series of messy hotel rooms as shadowy torture chambers.

Gary Oldman and Chloe Webb, the Sid and Nancy, are genuine actors, not free riders on facile naturalistic speech and gesture. They consider and create every moment of the wasting of these characters' lives as punctiliously as if they were following an etiquette of self-destruction. With Cox's help, Oldman and Webb give us two atoms blowing through contemporary waste, atoms that, after scrutiny, have names and faces. Inevitably *Sid and Nancy* has been called a punk *Romeo and Juliet*, an instance of true love blooming amidst decay. But these two lovers drug themselves out of passion and into dependency. They cling to each other, not to keep from drowning but to drown together. They don't particularly want to be dead, but they want to die together. After he knifes her, in the middle of a foggy quarrel, his life in effect stops with hers.

The last sequence, a fantasy, is wonderfully apt. I won't describe it; I'll note only that their idea of paradise is the only moment in this somber film that is poignant.

New York has just suffered its 24th attack of cinematic hype—the annual New York Film Festival at Lincoln Center. I return to this subject (if it can be called a return; the last time I discussed it was in 1965) because the sheer silliness of the matter becomes more evident every year.

This year, in a familiar pattern, the festival presented 23 features. (I'm putting aside a double bill that made up one evening and the ten shorts that were also shown.) Two of the features were revivals (*Dodsworth* and *The Wedding March*). Of the remaining 21 films, 16 had been acquired by distributors before the festival began and are scheduled for release in the coming months. (In fact, a few of them opened in theaters even before the festival had finished.)

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Down by Law. Jim Jarmusch's cool, sardonic tale of three cons escaped from a New Orleans jail. Credible until the deliberately incredible jolts us out of gullibility. (Reviewed 9/29/86)

Otello. Placido Domingo and Justino Diaz give performances that redeem this abridged version of Verdi's masterwork. Franco Zeffirelli directs with his aestheticism restrained. (10/6/86)

Partisans of Vilna. Recent interviews with survivors of the first Jewish resistance against the Germans. Naturally, simply powerful. (10/20/86)

Sherman's March. Casual, intelligent, witty. Ross McElwee, who started to make a documentary along the route of the Civil War march, ended with a gallery of women he knew and met on the way. (10/13/86)

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Thus, of all the festival's new films, only five are not certain to be shown elsewhere soon.

I'm not quarreling here with the quality of the festival's choices. (*Sid and Nancy* was one of them.) I'm questioning its reason for existence. The big European festivals, Cannes and Venice and Berlin, serve as trade fairs. In fact, almost all of the New York Festival pictures were shown at those European festivals, which is where many distributors acquired American rights. The New York gala only minimally serves even that commercial purpose: only rarely is one of this festival's available films bought by an American distributor because of its Lincoln Center showing.

In fairness I must note that the Film Society of Lincoln Center, which sponsors the festival, also co-sponsors with the Museum of Modern Art an annual series called New Directors/New Films. This series, done at the museum, is adventurous and useful. But in the perspective of the Film Society's year, the museum series takes on the aspect of a good deed in a naughty world of hoopla.

The Lincoln Center event is, in the main, only an amplified version of the Fall Forecast sections that newspapers and magazines run; instead of blurbs and snippets, here we can see whole films. Attendance is high, it's said, so some of each audience is willing to pay one-third more—eight dollars instead of the ordinary theater's six dollars—just to see a film before it opens generally.

What's the point of it all? What's the point of all the ballyhoo and advertising and aggrandizement? None, as the festival is now constituted. It's a paradigm of the non-event. But New Yorkers flock to this non-event, this elongated Prevues of Coming Attractions, and get an extra bonus of exaltation because it's called a festival. How Athenian of us.

Television

Tout Of Africa

As the waves of fashion roll by, the explicators follow the popularizers. After *The Jewel in the Crown*, *Gandhi*, and *A Passage to India* came last year's great exhibitions of Indian art at the Metropolitan and elsewhere. *Brideshead* on television warmed the public up for the lavish show about country houses at the National Gallery. And now, following *Out of Africa* (and, I suppose, *King Solomon's Mines*) comes Professor Ali A. Mazrui to explain "The Africans: A Triple Heritage." His nine-part television series began on October 7, and the book-of-the-show is published by Little, Brown.

"The Africans: A Triple Heritage"
(PBS)

The series was shown by the BBC earlier this summer and caused a stir, though not the same stir as the American broadcast has caused even before it begins. The chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Lynne V. Cheney, has attacked both the program and WETA, the Washington public television station that produced "The Africans" jointly with the BBC. WETA blew more than $600,000 of the Endowment's money on the show (total budget, $3.5 million), and according to Cheney the result is largely an "anti-Western diatribe."

Is it? Certainly "The Africans" is a very bizarre series and a very bizarre book. But then Professor Mazrui is an odd chap. He is Kenyan and Moslem by birth, educated in England with an Oxford doctorate, but he is now lodged at Ann Arbor, where for the last 13 years he has been professor of political science and of Afro-American and African Studies at the University of Michigan. For some time he has enjoyed a celebrity of sorts among Africanists and on the international conference circuit. But he first became famous, or notorious, in England seven years ago, when he gave the 1979 Reith Lectures on BBC Radio. Named after the sainted (though not very saintly) cultural dictator of the BBC in its early years, these lectures are the corporation's annual intellectual showpiece and highest accolade. And the BBC wasn't happy with what it had done when it appointed Mazrui to deliver them. In its house magazine, the *Listener*, a commentator—speaking ex cathedra, it was hinted—said that Mazrui had "humiliated the idea of the Reith lecture" (which says something about the BBC's sense of self-importance as well).

In truth, the lectures weren't all that humiliating, but they were, well, bizarre. Mazrui's style is fizzy. He shoots out endless ideas, aperçus, bees from the bonnet. Some of what he said then was perfectly sensible ("Nobody knows as of now what ideally is the best for Africa"). Some was designed to give offense, more to Africanists on the left (almost a pleonasm) than to conservatives in the West—such as his casual, then-heretical remark that the "socialist path" wasn't necessarily or obviously the one for Africa to take. And some of the things he said were not only true but profound: for example, that a post-apartheid South Africa will not necessarily be more humane, just less racist. This is a deep truth that should be learned by all who want to see the end of white supremacy there. What really stopped the Reith show was Mazrui's startling suggestion that Africa would never really take its place among the powers until it had its own nuclear weapons (controlled by the OAU?), something he seemed to be looking forward to.

There is much of the same enjoyable and disturbing stuff in "The Africans." Mazrui is as full of ideas as ever—good, bad, and strange. He is obsessed by geography and the wrongheadedness of the conventional map of the world ("There is no reason, from an astronautical or cosmonautical point of view, why the South Pole should not be the North Pole and vice versa"); and the Arabian peninsula, he insists rather often, ought to be reckoned as part of Africa. There are some delightful turns of phrase in his narration, and, in the book, some delightful cross-heads: "In search of rural sportswomen" is one of my favorites.

Of course, much of this reads as anti-Western. Much of it is anti-Western, whatever that means. And why not? It is hard to write about the slave trade, for example, or some of the later exploits of European imperialism in a glowingly "pro-Western" way. It is true that Mazrui blames the West for many African ills for which the West, its colonialism notwithstanding, cannot be held responsible—the condition of many Af-

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rican economies, for example.

But I suspect that what Cheney objects to is Mazrui's treatment of Qaddafi's Libya, which, if not exactly sympathetic, is certainly a long way from the anathematization of the colonel and his country in the West. (The book, by the way, doesn't correspond exactly to the television program here, or elsewhere.) This appears to be another piece of Mazruian silliness. Still, painful as it is, it may not do us any harm to be reminded that a large part of the world simply doesn't see the conflict between President Reagan and Colonel Qaddafi as a conflict between light and darkness. And Cheney is on the wrong track when she moans about the lack of "objectivity and balance" in "The Africans." Objectivity and balance are the bane of contemporary journalism, especially American newspapers and television. Maybe the series could have been edited into scrupulous evenhandedness. Maybe some of its most outrageous arguments could have been removed. In the process it would have lost all its shrillness and its silliness, but probably everything in it that is interesting as well.

In any event, the trigger phrase "anti-Western" gives a false picture of Mazrui's lucubrations. Many Africanists (the English Marxist Basil Davidson, who gave us another television series and book two years ago, for good example) hammer a relentless theme: not only has the West, or Europe, harshly used Africa, but the Africans have a historical and cultural heritage that compares favorably with Europe's. Since, in point of fact, any attempt to portray tropical Africa's cultural achievements as the equal, on the same terms, of Europe's (or of Asia's) is doomed to failure, it is hard to see what good it does the Africans to make this argument. But this is not Mazrui's line at all.

What he seems to be asking, in his puzzled and rather likable way, is why Africa is such a screwup. As he puts it, the "archival tradition was weak in Africa" (which is one way to describe a preliterate society). As a result, "the scientific tradition became weak, sometimes our languages atrophied and so did philosophical traditions." The self-aggrandizing school of Africanists will forever take us to the Pyramids or the haunting remains at Great Zimbabwe, but these examples are only a reminder of how *few* large masonry edifices exist that are the work of African societies. For Mazrui, it is "the absence of castles, cathedrals, and written contracts" that distinguishes Africa, and that has made it so vulnerable to racist pillage and slavery. One of his heroes is Aimé Césaire, who saluted

> Those who have invented neither powder nor the compass
> Those who have tamed neither gas nor electricity
> Those who have explored neither the seas nor the skies . . .

which is honest and true—and (again) bizarre.

HOW MAZRUI'S audience will take all this I am not sure. A British reviewer shrewdly concluded that finally "The Africans" is designed for the 25 million Afro-Americans in the United States. That is good and bad. It is good for black Americans to be reminded of their heritage, and it is good for everyone to be reminded of what has been done to Africa and what its problems are. And, not least, what it looks like: Mazrui got into hot water with some Africanists of the kind who believe in exploitation, the whole exploitation, and nothing but exploitation by suggesting that one of the impulses behind colonialism was aesthetic, the sheer beauty of Africa. I think he is right, and the screen gives more than an inkling of why.

But it is less good if Afro-Americans are made to identify with Africa. As a number of important black American writers have pointed out, black Americans have far less in common with Africa than Polish-Americans have with Poland or Italian-Americans with Italy. The distinctive experience of slavery has seen to that. A black American intellectual is an American intellectual who happens to be black, not an "Afro-American."

Which leaves the problem of the African intellectual's identity, a problem exemplified by Ali Mazrui himself. Much more damning than charges of anti-Western bias are Mazrui's lack of sophistication, his buffoonery, and his eccentricity. Anyone can charge him (and be charged) with political bias. It is much harder to say that if his program were the work of a white man, much of it would be laughed out of court rather than condemned.

We leave Mazrui's show confronting a

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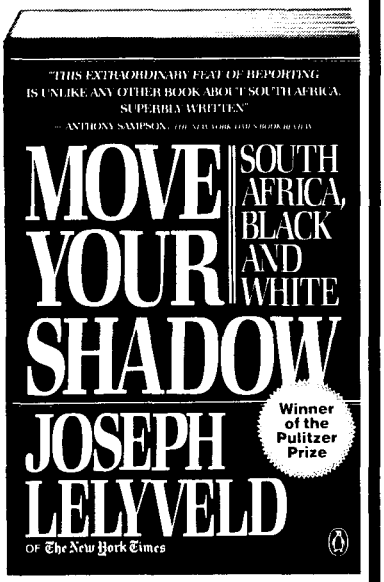
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set of historical conundrums. Television is not an African creation. Neither is the book. What, then, is an "African television program," or an African book? Is this what they are? If Mazrui wants to celebrate the absence of cathedrals and compasses from Africa, and more generally the absence of what in Europe passes for culture, where does that leave professors of African studies at Ann Arbor? Ali Mazrui may be anti-Western in his politics, but isn't he, in another sense, also Western, indeed peculiarly Western, despite his skin and his religion?

"The Africans" does not answer these difficult and somewhat awkward questions. But provoking us to ask them, and to expose some of the falsities inherent in this sort of enterprise, is more stimulating than Cheney and some of the show's other critics realize.

GEOFFREY WHEATCROFT

Geoffrey Wheatcroft, a columnist for the *London Standard*, is the author of *The Randlords: The Exploits and Exploitation of South Africa's Mining Magnates* (Atheneum).

How literature has (and has not) met its greatest challenge.

WRITING AND THE HOLOCAUST

BY IRVING HOWE

OUR SUBJECT RESISTS the usual capacities of mind. We may read the Holocaust as the central event of this century; we may register the pain of its unhealed wounds; but finally we must acknowledge that it leaves us intellectually disarmed, staring helplessly at the reality or, if you prefer, the mystery of mass extermination. There is little likelihood of finding a rational structure of explanation for the Holocaust: it forms a sequence of events without historical or moral precedent. To think about ways in which the literary imagination might "use" the Holocaust is to entangle ourselves with a multitude of problems for which no aesthetic can prepare us. Neither encompassing theory nor religious faith enables us to reach a firm conviction that now, at last, we understand what happened during the "Final Solution."

I.

THE HOLOCAUST is continuous with, indeed forms, a sequence of events within Western history, and at the same time it is a unique historical enterprise. To study its genesis within Western history may help us discover its roots in traditional anti-Semitism, fed in turn by Christian myth, German romanticism, and the breakdown of capitalism in 20th-century Europe between the wars. But it is a grave error to make, or "elevate," the Holocaust into an occurrence outside of history, a sort of diabolic visitation, for then we tacitly absolve its human agents of their responsibility. To do this is a grave error even if, so far and perhaps forever, we lack adequate categories for comprehending how such a sequence of events could occur. The Holocaust was long prepared for in the history of Western civilization, though not all those who engaged in the preparation knew what they were doing or would have welcomed the outcome.

In the concentration camps set up by the Nazis, such as those at Dachau and Buchenwald, there was an endless quantity of cruelty and sadism, some of it the spontaneous doings of psychopaths and thugs given total command of the camps by the Nazi government, and some of it the result of a calculated policy taking into cynical account the consequences of allowing psychopaths and thugs total command. Piles of corpses accumulated in these camps. Yet a thin continuity can be detected between earlier locales of brutality and the "concentrationary universe." In some pitiable sense, the prisoners in these camps still lived—they were starved, broken, tormented, but they still lived. A faint margin of space could sometimes be carved out for the human need to maintain community and personality, even while both were being steadily destroyed. Horrible these camps surely were; but even as they pointed toward, they did not yet constitute the "Final Solution."

The Nazis had an idea. To dehumanize systematically both guards and prisoners, torturers and tortured, meant to create a realm of subjugation no longer responsive to the common norms and expectations of human society; and from this process of dehumanization they had themselves set in motion, the Nazis could then "conclude" that, indeed, Jews were not human. This Nazi idea would lead to and draw upon sadism, but at least among the leaders and theoreticians, it was to be distinguished from mere sadism: it was an abstract rage, the most terrible of all rages. This Nazi idea formed a low parody of that messianism that declared that once mankind offered a warrant of faith and conduct, deliverance would come to earth in the shape of a savior bringing the good days—a notion corrupted by false messiahs into a "forcing of days" and by totalitarian movements into the physical elimination of "contaminating" races and classes. There was also in Nazi ideology a low parody of that yearning or mania for "completely" remaking societies and cultures that has marked modern political life.

When the Nazis established their realm of subjection in the concentration camps, they brought the impulse to nihilism, so strong in modern culture, to a point of completion no earlier advocate had supposed possible. The Italian-Jewish writer Primo Levi, soon after arriving at Auschwitz, was told by a Nazi guard: *Hier ist kein warum*, here there is no why, here nothing need be explained. This passing observation by a shrewd thug provides as good an insight into the world of the camps as anything found in

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the entire scholarly literature. What we may still find difficult to grasp is the peculiar blend of ideology and nihilism—the way these two elements of thought, seemingly in friction, were able to join harmoniously, thereby releasing the satanic energies of Nazism.

BY NOW WE have an enormous body of memoirs and studies describing the experience of imprisonment in the concentration camps. Inevitably, there are clashes of remembrance and opinion. For the psychoanalyst Bruno Bettelheim, held captive in Dachau and Buchenwald in 1939, it was apparently still possible to cope with life in the camps, if only through inner moral resistance, a struggle to "understand" that might "safeguard [one's ego] in such a way that, if by any good luck he should regain liberty, [the prisoner] would be approximately the same person he was" before being deprived of liberty. Precisely this seemed impossible to Jean Améry, a gifted Austrian-Jewish writer who had been imprisoned in Auschwitz. No survivor, no one who had ever been tortured by the SS, he later wrote, could be "approximately the same person" as before.

Even to hope for survival meant, in Améry's view, to "capitulate unconditionally in the face of reality," and that reality was neither more nor less than the unlimited power and readiness of the SS to kill. The victim lived under "an absolute sovereign" whose mission—a mission of pleasure—was torture, "in an orgy of unchecked self-expansion." Thereby "the transformation of the person into flesh became complete." As for "the word"—which for Améry signified something akin to what "safeguarding the ego" meant for Bettelheim—it "always dies when the claim of some reality is total." For then no space remains between thought and everything external to thought.

It would be impudent to choose between the testimonies of Bettelheim and Améry. A partial explanation for their differences of memory and understanding may be that Bettelheim was a prisoner in 1939 and Améry in 1943-5. Bettelheim's ordeal predated slightly the "Final Solution," while Améry was held captive in the Auschwitz that Hannah Arendt quite soberly called a "corpse factory." It is also possible that these writers, in reflecting upon more or less similar experiences, were revealing "natural" differences in human response. We cannot be certain.

By the time the Nazis launched their "Final Solution" such differences of testimony had become relatively insignificant. The Holocaust reached its point of culmination as the systematic and impersonal extermination of millions of human beings, denied life, and even death as mankind had traditionally conceived it, simply because they fell under the abstract category of "Jew." It became clear that the sadism before and during the "Final Solution" on the trains that brought the Jews to the camps and in the camps themselves was not just incidental or gratuitous; it was a carefully worked-out preparation for the gas chambers. But for the Nazi leaders, originating theoreticians of death, what mattered most was the *program* of extermination. No personal qualities or accomplishments of the victims, no features of character or appearance, mattered. The abstract perversity of categorization declaring Jews to be *Untermenschen* as determined by allegedly biological traits was unconditional.

No absolute division of kind existed between concentration and death camps, and some, like the grouping of camps at Auschwitz, contained both quarters for slave laborers and gas chambers, with recurrent "selections" from the former feeding the latter. Still, the distinction between the two varieties of camps has some descriptive and analytic value: it enables us to distinguish between what was and was not historically unique about the Holocaust.

Whatever was unique took place in the death camps, forming a sequence of events radically different from all previous butcheries in the history of mankind. Revenge, enslavement, dispersion, large-scale slaughter of enemies, all are a commonplace of the past; but the physical elimination of a categorized segment of mankind was, both as idea and fact, new. "The destruction of Europe's Jews," Claude Lanzmann has written, "cannot be logically deduced from any ... system of presuppositions.... Between the conditions that permitted extermination and the extermination itself—the *fact* of the extermination—there is a break in continuity, a hiatus, an abyss." That abyss forms the essence of the Holocaust.

II.

I CANNOT think of another area of literary discourse in which a single writer has exerted so strong, if diffused, an influence as Theodore Adorno has on discussions of literature and the Holocaust. What Adorno offered in the early 1950s was not a complete text or even a fully developed argument. Yet his few scattered remarks had an immediate impact, evidently because they brought out feelings held by many people.

"After Auschwitz," wrote Adorno, "to write a poem is barbaric." It means to

> squeeze aesthetic pleasure out of artistic representation of the naked bodily pain of those who have been knocked down by rifle butts.... Through aesthetic principles or stylization ... the unimaginable ordeal still appears as if it had some ulterior purpose. It is transfigured and stripped of some of its horror, and with this, injustice is already done to the victims.

Adorno was by no means alone in expressing such sentiments, nor in recognizing that his sentiments, no matter how solemnly approved, were not likely to keep anyone from trying to represent through fictions or evoke through poetic symbols the concentration and death camps. A Yiddish poet, Aaron Tsaytlin, wrote in a similar vein after the Holocaust:

> Were Jeremiah to sit by the ashes of Israel today, he would not cry out a lamentation.... The Almighty Himself would be powerless to open his well of tears. He would maintain a deep silence. For even an outcry is now a lie, even tears are mere literature, even prayers are false.

Tsaytlin's concluding sentence anticipated the frequently asserted but as frequently ignored claim that all responses to the Holocaust are inadequate, including, and perhaps especially, those made with the most exalted sentiments and language. Here, for instance, is Piotr Rawicz, a Jewish writer born in the Ukraine who after his release from the camps wrote in French. In his novel *Blood from the Sky*, Rawicz put down certain precepts that the very existence of his book seems to violate:

> The "literary manner" is an obscenity.... Literature [is] the art, occasionally remunerative, of rummaging in vomit. And yet, it would appear, one has to write. So as to trick loneliness, so as to trick other people.

Looking back at such remarks of several decades ago, we may wonder what these writers were struggling to express, what half-formed or hidden feelings prompted their outcries. I will offer a few speculations, confining myself to Adorno.

Adorno was not so naive as to prescribe for writers a line of conduct that

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would threaten their very future as writers. Through a dramatic outburst he probably meant to focus upon the sheer difficulty—the literary risk, the moral peril—of dealing with the Holocaust in literature. It was as if he were saying: given the absence of usable norms through which to grasp the meaning (if there is one) of the scientific extermination of millions, given the intolerable gap between the aesthetic conventions and the loathsome realities of the Holocaust, and given the improbability of coming up with images and symbols that might serve as "objective correlatives" for events that the imagination can hardly take in, writers in the post-Holocaust era might be wise to be silent. Silent, at least, about the Holocaust.

This warning, if such it was, had a certain prophetic force. It anticipated, first, the common but mistaken notion that literature somehow has an obligation to encompass (or as professors say, to "cover") all areas of human experience, no matter how extreme or impenetrable they might be; and, second, the corruptions of the mass media that would suppose itself equipped to master upon demand any theme or subject. (I think here of a story that I have on the highest authority. The producers of the television serial called "Holocaust" first approached Leo Tolstoy with a tempting offer to write the script, for they had heard he was the author of some good books. After listening to them politely, the Russian writer turned pale and mumbled: "No, no, there are some things that even I cannot do. For what you want, you should turn to Gerald Green.")

Adorno might have been rehearsing a traditional aesthetic idea: that the representation of a horrible event, especially if in drawing upon literary skills it achieves a certain graphic power, could serve to domesticate it, rendering it familiar and in some sense even tolerable, and thereby shearing away part of the horror. The comeliness of even the loosest literary forms is likely to soften the impact of what is being rendered, and in most renderings of imaginary situations we tacitly expect and welcome this. But with a historical event such as the Holocaust—an event regarding which the phrase "such as" cannot really be employed—the chastening aspects of literary mimesis can be felt to be misleading, a questionable way of reconciling us with the irreconcilable or of projecting a symbolic "transcendence" that in actuality is no more than a reflex of our baffled will.

Adorno might have had in mind the possibility of an insidious relation between the represented (or even the merely evoked) Holocaust and the spectator enthralled precisely as, or perhaps even because, he is appalled—a relation carrying a good share of voyeuristic sadomasochism. Can we really say that in reading a memoir or novel about the Holocaust, or in seeing a film such as *Shoah*, we gain the pleasure, or catharsis, that is customarily associated with the aesthetic transaction? More disquieting, can we be sure that we do not gain a sort of illicit pleasure from our pained submission to such works? I do not know how to answer these questions, which threaten many of our usual assumptions about what constitutes an aesthetic experience; but I think that even the most disciplined scholar of the Holocaust ought every once in a while to re-examine the nature of his responses.

More speculative still is the thought that Adorno, perhaps with only a partial awareness, was turning back to a "primitive" religious feeling—the feeling that there are some things in our experience, or some aspects of the universe, that are too terrible to be looked at or into directly.

In ancient mythologies and religions there are things and beings that are not to be named. They may be the supremely good or supremely bad, but for mortals they are the unutterable, since there is felt to be a limit to what man may see or dare, certainly to what he may meet. Perseus would turn to stone if he were to look directly at the serpent-headed Medusa, though he would be safe if he looked at her only through a reflection in a mirror or a shield (this latter being, as I shall argue, the very strategy that the cannier writers have adopted in dealing with the Holocaust).

Perhaps dimly, Adorno wished to suggest that the Holocaust might be regarded as a secular equivalent—if there can be such a thing—of that which in the ancient myths could not be gazed at or named directly; that before which men had to avert their eyes; that which in the properly responsive witness would arouse the "holy dread" Freud saw as the essence of taboos. And in such taboos, I suppose, the prohibition was imposed not in order to enforce ignorance but to regulate, or guard against the consequences of, knowledge.

How this taboo might operate without the sanctions and structure of an orga-

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nized religion and its linked mythology I cannot grasp: it would require a quantity of shared or communal discipline beyond anything we can suppose. Adorno must have known this as well as anyone else. He must have known that in our culture the concept of limit serves mostly as a barrier or hurdle to be overcome, not as a perimeter of respect. Perhaps his remarks are to be taken as a hopeless admonition, a plea for the improvization of limit that he knew would not and indeed could not be heeded, but which it was nevertheless necessary to make.

III.

HOLOCAUST writings make their primary claim, I would say, through facts recorded or remembered. About this most extreme of human experiences there cannot be too much documentation, and what matters most in such materials is exactitude: the sober number, the somber date. Beyond that, Holocaust writings often reveal the helplessness of the mind before an evil that cannot quite be imagined, or the helplessness of the imagination before an evil that cannot quite be understood. This shared helplessness is the major reason for placing so high a value on the memoir, a kind of writing in which the author has no obligation to do anything but, in accurate and sober terms, tell what he experienced and witnessed. To do this, as Isaac Rosenfeld once remarked, is to have the rare "courage . . . to stay near the thing itself and not to cast out for the usual reassurance."

Can we so readily justify our feelings about the primary worth of reliable testimony? Prudential arguments seem increasingly dubious here, since it should by now be clear that remembering does not necessarily forestall repetition. The instinctive respect we accord honest testimony, regardless of whether it is "well written," may in part be due to a persuasion that the aesthetic is not the primary standard for judgments of human experience, and that there can be, indeed often enough have been, situations in which aesthetic and moral standards come into conflict. Our respect for testimony may also be due in part to an unspoken persuasion that we owe something to the survivors who expose themselves to the trauma of recollection: we feel that we should listen to them apart from whether it "does any good." As for the millions who did not survive, it would be mere indulgence to suppose that any ceremonies of recollection could "make up for" or "transcend" their destruction—all such chatter, too frequent in writings about the Holocaust, is at best the futility of eloquence. Still, there are pieties that civilized people want to confirm even if, sometimes because, these are not more than gestures.

Another piety is to be invoked here. We may feel that heeding the survivors' testimony contributes to the fund of shared consciousness, which also means to our own precarious sense of being, whether individual or collective, and that, somehow, this is good. Henry James speaks somewhere of an ideal observer upon whom nothing is lost, who witnesses the entirety of the human lot, and though James in his concerns is about as far from something like the Holocaust as any writer could be, I think it just to borrow his vision of consciousness for our very different ends. The past summoned by Holocaust memoirs not only tells us something unbearable, and therefore unforgettable, about the life of mankind; it is a crucial part of our own time, if not of our direct experience. To keep the testimony of Holocaust witnesses in the forefront of our consciousness may not make us "better" people, but it may at least bring a touch of accord with our sense of the time we have lived in and where we have come from.

THERE IS still another use of this testimony, and that is to keep the Holocaust firmly within the bounds of history, so that it will not end up as a preface to apocalypse or eschatology, or worse still, decline into being the legend of a small people. "Nobody," said the historian Ignacy Schipper in Maidenek, "will *want* to believe us, because our disaster is the disaster of the entire civilized world." Schipper's phrasing merits close attention. He does not say that the disaster was experienced by the entire civilized world, which might entail a sentimental "universalizing" of the Holocaust in the manner of writers like William Styron; he says that the disaster of the Jews was (or should have been) shared by the entire civilized world, so that what happened to "us" might form a weight upon the consciousness of that world, even as we may recognize that sooner or later the world will seek to transfer it to some realm "beyond" history, a realm at once more exalted and less accusatory. Yet history is exactly where the Holocaust must remain, and for that, there can never be enough testimony.

Let us now turn briefly to a few witnesses, invoking them along a slope of destruction.

Chaim Kaplan's Warsaw diary, covering a bit less than a year from its opening date of September 1, 1938, is a document still recognizably within the main tradition of Western writing: a man observes crucial events and strives to grasp their significance. Kaplan's diary shows the discipline of a trained observer; his prose is lucid and restrained; he records the effort of Warsaw Jewry to keep a fragment of its culture alive even as it stumbles into death; and he reveals a torn soul wondering what premises of faith, or delusion, sustain his "need to record." Barely, precariously, we are still in the world of the human as we have understood it, for nothing can be more human than to keep operating with familiar categories of thought while discovering they will no longer suffice.

ELIE WIESEL'S first book, *Night*, written simply and without rhetorical indulgence, is a slightly fictionalized record of his sufferings as a boy in Auschwitz and during a forced march together with his father and other prisoners through the frozen countryside to Buchenwald. The father dies of dysentery in Buchenwald, and the boy—or the writer remembering himself as a boy—reveals his guilty relief at feeling that the death of his father has left him "free at last," not as any son might feel but in the sense that now he may be able to save himself without the burden of an ailing father. No sensitive reader will feel an impulse to judgment here. Indeed, that is one of the major effects of honest testimony about the Holocaust—it dissolves any impulse to judge what the victims did or did not do, since there are situations so extreme that it seems immoral to make judgments about those who must endure them. We are transported here into a dark subworld, where freedom and moral sensibility may survive in memory but cannot be exercised in practice. Enforced degradation—from which no one, finally, is exempt—forms the penultimate step toward the ovens.

The ovens dominate the camps that the Nazis, not inaccurately, called *anus mundi*. Filip Mueller's *Eyewitness Auschwitz* is the artless account of being transported from his native Slovakia in April 1942 to Auschwitz, where he worked for two-and-a-half years as a *Sonderkommando*, or assistant at the gas chambers.

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Somehow Mueller survived. His narrative is free of verbal embellishment or thematic reflection; he indulges neither in self-apology nor self-attack; he writes neither art nor history. His book is simply the story of a simple man who processed many corpses. Even in this book, terrible beyond any that I have ever read, there are still a few touches recalling what we take to be humanity: efforts at theodicy by men who cannot justify their faith, a recital of the kaddish by doomed prisoners who know that no one else will say it for them. In the world Mueller inhabited and served, "the transformation of the person into flesh" and of flesh into dust "became complete." It was a world for which, finally, we have no words.

BUT ISN'T there, a skeptical voice may interject, a touch of empiricist naïveté in such high claims for Holocaust memoirs? Memory can be treacherous among people who have suffered terribly and must feel a measure of guilt at being alive at all. Nor can we be sure of the truth supplied by damaged and overwrought witnesses, for whatever knowledge we may claim about these matters is likely to come mainly from the very memoirs we find ourselves submitting, however uneasily, to critical judgment.

The skeptical voice is cogent, and I would only say in reply that we are not helpless before the accumulated mass of recollection. Our awe before the suffering and our respect for the sufferers does not disable us from making discriminations of value, tone, authority. There remain the usual historical tests, both through external check and internal comparison; and there is still that indispensable organ, the reader's ear, bending toward credence or doubt.

The test of the ear is a delicate and perilous one, entailing a shift from testimony to witness—a shift that, except perhaps with regard to the scrappiest of chronicles, seems unavoidable. Reading Holocaust memoirs we respond not just to their accounts of what happened; we respond also to qualities of being, tremors of sensibility, as these emerge even from the bloodiest pages. We respond to the modesty or boastfulness, the candor or evasiveness, the self-effacement or self-promotion of the writers. We respond, most of all, to a quality that might be called moral poise, by which I mean a readiness to engage in a complete reckoning with the past, insofar as there can be one—a strength of remembrance that

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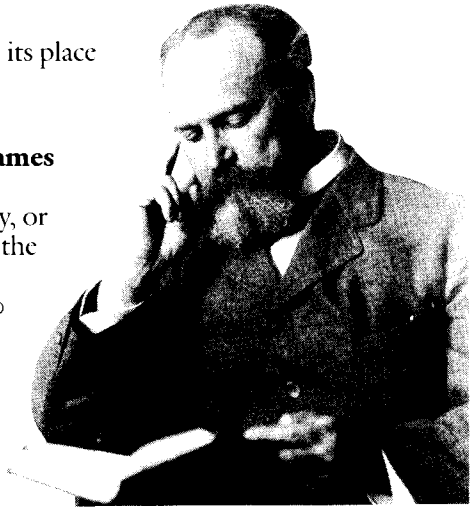

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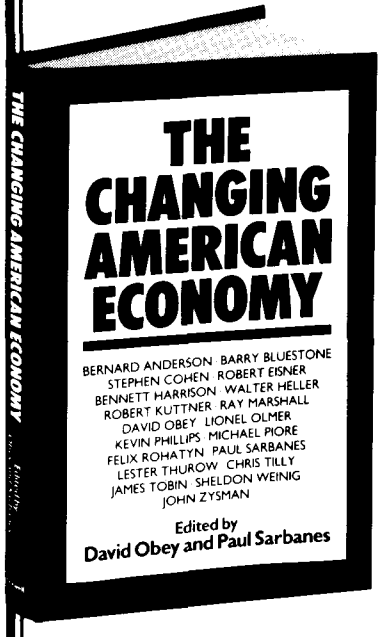

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leads the writer into despair and then perhaps a little beyond it, so that he does not flinch from anything, neither shame nor degradation, yet refuses to indulge in those outbursts of self-pity, sometimes sliding into self-aggrandizement, that understandably mar a fair number of Holocaust memoirs.

But is there not something shameful in subjecting the work of survivors to this kind of scrutiny? Perhaps so; yet in choosing to become writers, they have no choice but to accept this burden.

The Holocaust was structured to destroy the very idea of private being. It was a sequence of events entirely "out there," in the objective world, the world of force and power. Yet as we read Holocaust memoirs and reaffirm their value as evidence, we find ourselves veering—less by choice than necessity—from the brute external to the fragile subjective, from matter to voice, from story to storyteller. And this leaves us profoundly uneasy, signifying that our earlier stress upon the value of testimony has now been complicated, perhaps even compromised, by the introduction of aesthetic considerations. We may wish with all our hearts to yield entirely to the demands of memory and evidence, but simply by virtue of reading, we cannot forget that the diarist was a person formed before and the memoirist a person formed after the Holocaust. We are ensnared in the cruelty of remembering, a compounded cruelty, in which our need for truthful testimony lures us into tests of authenticity.

That, in any case, is how we read. I bring as a "negative" witness a memoirist not to be named: he puts his ordeal at the service of a familiar faith or ideology, and it comes to seem sad, for that faith or ideology cannot bear the explanatory and expiatory burdens he would place upon it. Another memoirist, also not to be named: he suborns his grief to public self-aggrandizement, and the grief he declares, surely sincere, is alloyed by streaks of publicity.

But Chaim Kaplan cares for nothing except the impossible effort to comprehend the incomprehensible; Filip Mueller for nothing except to recall happenings even he finds hard to credit; Primo Levi for nothing but to render his days in the camps through a language unadorned and chaste.

We are trapped. Our need for testimony that will forever place the Holocaust squarely within history requires that we respond to voice, nuance, personality. Our desire to see the Holocaust in weightier terms than the merely aesthetic lures us into a shy recognition of the moral reverberations of the aesthetic. This does not make us happy, but the only alternative is the silence we all remember, now and then, to praise.

IV.

"WE BECAME aware," writes Primo Levi, "that our language lacks words to express this offense, the demolition of man." Every serious writer approaching the Holocaust sooner or later says much the same. If there is a way of coping with this difficulty, it lies in a muted tactfulness recognizing that there are some things that can be said and some that cannot.

Let me cite a few sentences from T. S. Eliot:

> Great simplicity is only won by an intense moment or by years of intelligent effort, or by both. It represents one of the most arduous conquests of the human spirit: the triumph of feeling and thought over the natural sin of language.

Exactly what Eliot meant by that astonishing phrase, "the natural sin of language," I cannot say with assurance, but that it applies to a fair portion of

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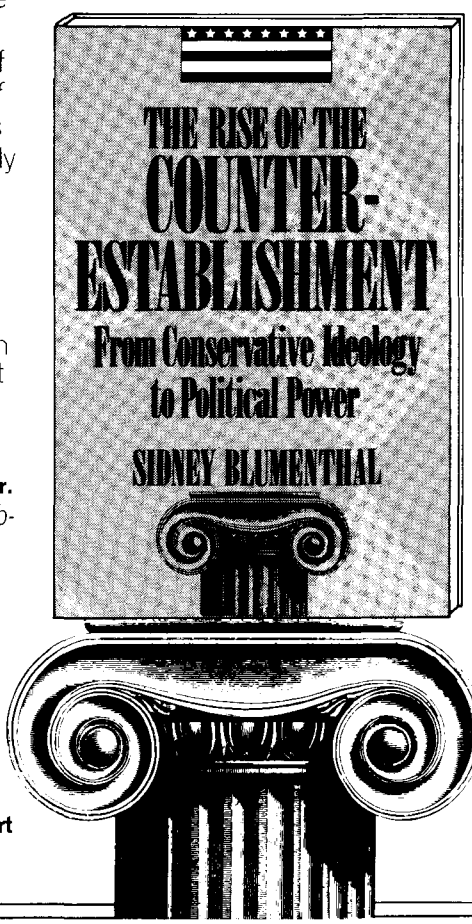

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Holocaust writing, both memoir and fiction, seems to me indisputable. A "natural sin" might here signify the inclination to grow wanton over our deepest griefs, thereby making them the substance of public exploitation. Or a mistaken effort, sincere or grandiose, to whip language into doing more than it can possibly do, more than thought and imagination and prayer can do. Language as it seduces us into the comforting grandiose.

When, by now as a virtual cliché, we say that language cannot deal with the Holocaust, we really have in mind, or perhaps are covering up for, our inadequacies of thought and feeling. We succumb to that "natural sin of language" because anyone who tries seriously to engage with the implications of the Holocaust must come up against a wall of incomprehension: *How could it be?* Not the behavior, admirable or deplorable, of the victims, and not the ideologies the Nazis drew upon form the crux of our bewilderment, but—how could human beings, raised in the center of European civilization, do this? If we then fall back on intellectual shorthand, invoking the problem of radical evil, what are we really doing but expressing our helplessness in another vocabulary? Not only is this an impassable barrier for the thought of moralists and the recall of memoirists; it is, I think, the greatest thematic and psychological difficulty confronting writers of fiction who try to represent or even evoke the Holocaust.

For the central question to be asked about these writings, a few of them distinguished and most decent failures, is this: What can the literary imagination, traditionally so proud of its self-generating capacities, add to—how can it go beyond—the intolerable matter cast up by memory? What could be the organizing categories, the implicit premises of perception and comprehension, through which the literary imagination might be able to render intelligible the gassing of 12,000 people a day at Auschwitz? If, as Sidra DeKoven Ezrahi remarks, literature has traditionally called upon "the timeless archetypes of human experience" to structure and infer significance from its materials, how can this now be done with a sequence of events that radically breaks from those "timeless archetypes"? A novelist can rehearse what we have learned from the documentation of David Rousset and Filip Mueller, from Primo Levi and Eugen Kogon, but apart from some minor smoothing and shaping, what can the novelist *do* with all this? And if, through sheer lack of any other recourse, he does fall back upon the ideological or theological categories of received Western thought, he faces the immediate risk of producing a fiction with a severe fissure between rendered event and imposed category—so that even a sympathetic reader may be inclined to judge the work as resembling a failed allegory in which narrative and moral are, at best, chained together by mere decision.

Let us see all this concretely, as it might affect a novelist's job of work. Yes, the facts are there, fearful and oppressive, piled up endlessly in memoirs and histories. He has studied them, tried to "make sense" of them in his mind, submitted himself to the barrage of horror. But what he needs—and does not have—is something that for most ordinary fictions written about most ordinary themes would come to him spontaneously, without his even being aware that it figures crucially in the act of composition: namely, a structuring set of ethical premises, to which are subordinately linked aesthetic biases, through which he can form, that is, integrate his materials. These ethical premises and aesthetic biases are likely to obtrude in consciousness only as a felt lack, only when a writer brooding over the endlessness of murder and torment asks how it can be turned or shaped into significant narrative. Nor, if he tries to escape from a confining realism and venture into symbolic or grotesque modes, can he find sufficiently used—you might say, sufficiently "broken in"—myths and metaphors that might serve as workable, publicly recognizable analogues for the Holocaust experience. Before *this* reality, the imagination comes to seem intimidated, overwhelmed, helpless. It can rehearse, but neither enlarge nor escape; it can describe happenings, but not endow them with the autonomy and freedom of a complex fiction; it remains—and perhaps this may even figure as a moral obligation—the captive of its raw material.

The Holocaust memoirist, as writer, is in a far less difficult position. True, he needs to order his materials in the rudimentary sense of minimal chronology and reportorial selectivity (though anything he honestly remembers could prove to be significant, even if not part of his own story). Insofar as he remains a memoirist, he is not obliged to interpret what he remembers. But the novelist,

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even if he supposes he is merely "telling a story," must—precisely in order to tell a story—"make sense" of his materials, either through explicit theory or, what is usually better, absorbed assumptions. Otherwise, no matter how vivid his style or sincere his feelings, he will finally be at a loss. All he will then be able to do is to present a kind of "fictionalized memoir"—which means not to move very far beyond what the memoirist has already done.

To avoid this difficulty, some novelists have concentrated on those camps that were not just "corpse factories" and that allowed some faint simulacrum of human life; or, like Jorge Semprun in *The Long Voyage*, they have employed flashbacks of life before imprisonment, so as to allow for some of that interplay of character and extension of narrative that is essential to works of imaginative fiction. Once our focus is narrowed, however, to the death camps, the locale of what must be considered the essential Holocaust, the novelist's difficulties come to seem awesome. For then, apart from the lack of cognitive structures, he has to face a number of problems that are specifically, narrowly literary.

THE HOLOCAUST is not, essentially, a dramatic subject. Much before, much after, and much surrounding the mass exterminations may be open to dramatic rendering. But the exterminations, in which thousands of dazed and broken people were sent up each day in smoke, hardly knowing and often barely able to respond to their fate, have little of drama in them. Terribleness yes; drama no.

Of those conflicts between wills, those inner clashes of belief and wrenchings of desire, those enactments of passion, all of which make up our sense of the dramatic, there can be little in the course of a fiction focused mainly on the mass exterminations. A heroic figure here, a memorable outcry there—that is possible. But those soon to be dead are already half or almost dead; the gas chambers merely finish the job begun in the ghettos and continued on the trains. The basic minimum of freedom to choose and act that is a central postulate of drama had been taken from the victims. The Nazis indulged in a peculiarly vicious parody of this freedom when they sometimes gave Jewish parents the "choice" of which child should be murdered.

The extermination process was so "brilliantly" organized that the life, and thereby the moral energy upon which drama ultimately depends, had largely been snuffed out of the victims before they entered the gas chambers. Here, in the death camps, the pitiful margin of space that had been allowed the human enterprise in the concentration camps was negated. Nor was it exactly death that reigned; it was annihilation. What then can the novelist make of this—what great clash or subtle inference—that a Filip Mueller has not already shown us?

IF THE death camps and mass exterminations allow little opening for the dramatic, they also give little space for the tragic in any traditional sense of that term. In classical tragedy man is defeated; in the Holocaust man is destroyed. In tragedy man struggles against forces that overwhelm him, struggles against both the gods and his own nature; and the downfall that follows may have an aspect of grandeur. This struggle allows for the possibility of an enlargement of character through the purgation of suffering, which in turn may bring a measure of understanding and a kind of peace. But except for some religious Jews who were persuaded that the Holocaust was a re-enactment of the great tradition of Jewish martyrdom, or for some secular Jews who lived out their ethic by choosing to die in solidarity with their fellows, or for those inmates who undertook doomed rebellions, the Jews destroyed in the camps were not martyrs continuing along the ways of their forefathers. They died, probably most of them, not because they chose at all costs to remain Jews, but because the Nazis chose to believe that being Jewish was an unchangeable, irredeemable condition. They were victims of a destruction that for many of them had little or only a fragmentary meaning—few of the victims, it seems, could even grasp the idea of total annihilation, let alone regard it as an act of high martyrdom. All of this does not make their death less terrible; it makes their death more terrible.

So much so that it becomes an almost irresistible temptation for Holocaust writers, whether discursive or fictional, to search for some redemptive token, some cry of retribution, some balancing of judgment against history's evil, some sign of ultimate spiritual triumph. It is as if, through the retrospect of language, they would lend a tragic aura . . . .

Many of the customary resources and conventions of the novel are unavailable to the writer dealing with the Holocaust. Small shifts in tone due to the surprises of freedom or caprice; the slow, rich development of character through testing and overcoming; the exertion of heroic energies by characters granted unexpectedly large opportunities; the slow emergence of moral flaws through an accumulation of seemingly trivial incidents; the withdrawal of characters into the recesses of their selves; the yielding of characters to large social impulses, movements, energies—these may not be entirely impossible in Holocaust fiction, but all must prove to be painfully limited. Even so apparently simple a matter as how a work of fiction is ended takes on a new and problematic aspect, for while a memoirist can just stop at some convenient point, the novelist must think in terms of resolutions and completions. But what, after having surrendered his characters to their fate, can he suppose those resolutions and completions to be? Finally, all such literary problems come down to the single inclusive problem of freedom. In the past even those writers most strongly inclined to determinism or naturalism have grasped intuitively that to animate their narratives they must give at least a touch of freedom to their characters. And that, as his characters inexorably approach the ovens, is precisely what the Holocaust writer cannot do.

V.

THE ISRAELI critic Hannah Yaoz, reports Sidra Ezrahi, has

> divided Holocaust fiction into historical and transhistorical modes—the first representing a mimetic approach which incorporates the events into the continuum of history and human experience, and the second transfiguring the events into a mythic reality where madness reigns and all historical loci are relinquished.

At least with regard to the Holocaust, the notion that there can be a "mythic reality" without "historical loci" seems to me dubious—for where then could the imagination find the materials for its act of "transfiguring"? Still, the division of Holocaust fiction proposed by the Israeli critic has some uses, if only to persuade us that finally both the writers who submit to and those who rebel against the historical mode must face pretty much the same problems.

The "mimetic approach" incorporating "events into the continuum of history" has been most strongly employed by the

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Polish writer Tadeusz Borowski in his collection of stories, *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*. Himself an Auschwitz survivor, Borowski writes in a cold, harsh, even coarse style, heavy with flaunted cynicism, and offering no reliefs of the heroic. Kapo Tadeusz, the narrator, works not only with but on behalf of the death system. "Write," he says, "that a portion of the sad fame of Auschwitz belongs to you as well." The wretched truth is that here survival means the complete yielding of self.

Like Filip Mueller in his memoir, Borowski's narrator admits that he lives because there is a steady flow of new "material" from the ghettos to the gas chambers. "It is true, others may be dying, but one is somehow still alive, one has enough food, enough strength to work. . . ." Let the transports stop and Kapo Tadeusz together with the other members of "Canada" (the labor gang that unloads the transports) will be liquidated.

Kapo Tadeusz lives in a world where mass murder is normal: it is *there*, it works, and it manages very well without moral justifications. The tone of detachment, which in a naturalistic novel would signal moral revulsion from represented ugliness, has here become a condition of survival. To lapse into what we might regard as human feeling—and sometimes Kapo Tadeusz and his fellow prisoners do that—is to risk not only the ordeal of memory but the loss of life: a pointless loss, without record or rebellion.

BOROWSKI'S STYLE conveys the rhythm of a hammering factuality, and in a way almost too complex to describe, one appreciates his absolute refusal to strike any note of redemptive nobility. Truthful and powerful as they are, Borowski's stories seem very close to those relentless Holocaust memoirs that show that there need be no limit to dehumanization. And that is just the point: for truthful and powerful as they are, Borowski's stories "work" mainly as testimony. Their authenticity makes us, I would say, all but indifferent to their status as art. We do not, perhaps cannot, read these stories as mediated fictions, imaginative versions of a human milieu in which men and women enter the usual range of relations. In Kapo Tadeusz's barrack there is simply no space for that complex interplay of action, emotion, dream, ambivalence, generosity, envy, and love that forms the basis of Western literature. The usual norms of human conduct—except for flashes of memory threatening survival—do not operate here. "We are not evoking evil irresponsibly," writes Borowski, "for we have now become part of it." Nor does it really matter whether Borowski was drawing upon personal memories or "making up" some of his stories. Composed in the fumes of destruction, even the stories he might have "made up" are not actually "made up": they are the substance of collective memory. *Hier ist kein warum*.

Inevitably, some Holocaust writers would try to escape from the vise of historical realism, and one of the most talented of these was the Ukrainian Jew Piotr Rawicz. Resting on a very thin narrative base, Rawicz's novel *Blood from the Sky* is a sustained, almost heroic rebellion against the demands of narrative—though in the end those demands reassert themselves, even providing the strongest parts of this wantonly brilliant book. What starts out as a traditional story soon turns into expressionist phantasmagoria seeking to project imagistic tokens for the Holocaust, or at least for the hallucinations it induces in the minds of witnesses. The story, often pressed far into the background, centers on a rich, highly educated, aristocratic Jew named Boris who saves himself from the Nazis through his expert command of German and Ukrainian—also through a disinclination to indulge in noble gestures. Upon this fragile strand of narrative Rawicz hangs a series of vignettes, excoriations, prose and verse poems, and mordant reflections of varying quality. The most effective are the ones visibly tied to some historical event, as in a brief sketch of a Nazi commander who orders the transport from Boris's town of all women named Goldberg because a woman of that name has infected him with a venereal disease. Symbolically freighted passages achieve their greatest force when they are also renderings of social reality, as in this description of a work party of prisoners sent by the Nazis to tear apart a Jewish cemetery:

> The party was demolishing some old tombstones. The blind, deafening hammer blows were scattering the sacred characters from inscriptions half a millennium old, and composed in praise of some holy man. . . . An *aleph* would go flying off to the left, while a *he* carved on another piece of stone dropped to the right. A *gimel* would bite the dust and a *nun* follow in its

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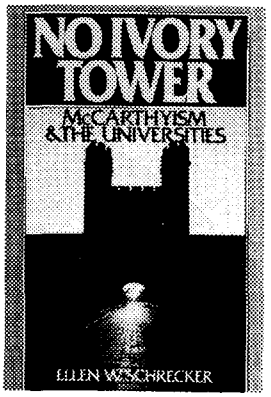

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> wake. . . . Several examples of *shin*, a letter symbolizing the miraculous intervention of God, had just been smashed and trampled on by the hammers and feet of these moribund workmen.

And then, several sentences later:

> Death—that of their fellow men, of the stones, of their own—had become unimportant to them; but hunger hadn't.

The strength of this passage rests upon a fusion of event described and symbol evoked, but that fusion is successfully achieved because the realistic description is immediately persuasive in its own right. Mimesis remains the foundation. When Rawicz, however, abandons story and character in his straining after constructs of language that will in some sense "parallel" the Holocaust theme, the prose cracks under an intolerable pressure. We become aware of an excess of tension between the narrative (pushed into the background but through its sheer horror still dominant) and the virtuosity of language (too often willed and literary). Rawicz's outcroppings of expressionist rage and grief, no matter how graphic in their own right, can only seem puny when set against the events looming across the book.

Still, there are passages in which Rawicz succeeds in endowing his language with a kind of hallucinatory fury, and then it lures us into an autonomous realm of the horrifying and the absurd. But when that happens, virtuosity takes command, coming to seem self-sufficient, without fixed points of reference, as if floating off on its own. Losing the causal tie with the Holocaust that the writer evidently hopes to maintain, the language overflows as if a discharge of sheer nausea. At least with regard to Holocaust fiction, I would say that efforts to employ "transhistorical modes" or "mythic reality" are likely to collapse into the very "continuum of history" they seek to escape—or else to come loose from the grounds of their creation.

VI.

M'KEN NISHT, literally, Yiddish for "one cannot"—so the Israeli writer Aharon Applefeld once explained to me why in his fictions about the Holocaust he did not try to represent it directly, always ending before or starting after the exterminations. He spoke with the intuitive shrewdness of the writer who knows when to stop—a rare and precious gift. But his remark also conveyed a certain ambiguity, as if *m'ken nisht* had a way of becoming *m'tur nisht*, "one must not," so that an acknowledgment of limit might serve as a warning of the forbidden.

In approaching the Holocaust, the canniest writers keep a wary distance. They know or sense that their subject cannot be met full-face. It must be taken on a tangent, with extreme wariness, through strategies of indirection and circuitous narratives that leave untouched the central horror—leave it untouched but always invoke or evoke it as hovering shadow. And this brings us to another of the ironies that recur in discussing this subject. We may begin with a suspicion that it is morally unseemly to submit Holocaust writings to fine critical discriminations, yet once we speak, as we must, about ways of approaching or apprehending this subject, we find ourselves going back to a fundamental concern of literary criticism, namely, how a writer validates his material.

Before. Aharon Applefeld's *Badenheim 1939* is a novella that at first glance contains little more than a series of banal incidents in a Jewish resort near Vienna at the start of the Second World War. Each trivial event brings with it a vague drift of anxiety. A character feels "haunted by a hidden fear, not her own." Posters go up in the town: "The Air Is Fresher in Poland." Guests in the hotel fear that "some alien spirit [has] descended." A musician explains deportations of Jews as if he were the very spirit of the century: it is "Historical Necessity." Applefeld keeps accumulating nervous detail; the writing flows seamlessly, enticingly, until one notices that the logic of this quiet narrative is a logic of hallucination and its quietness mounts into a thick cloud of foreboding. At the end, the guests are being packed into "four filthy freight cars"—but here Applefeld abruptly stops, as if recognizing a limit to the sovereignty of words. Nothing is said or shown of what is to follow: the narrative is as furtive as the history it evokes; the unspeakable is not to be named.

During. Pierre Gascar, a Frenchman, not Jewish, who was a POW during the Second World War, has written in his long story "The Seasons of the Dead" one of the very few masterpieces of Holocaust fiction. Again, no accounts of torture or portrayal of concentration camps or imaginings of the gas chambers. All is evoked obliquely, through a

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haze of fearfulness and disbelief. The narrator makes no effort to hide his Parisian sophistication, but what he sees as a prisoner sent to a remote camp in Poland breaks down his categories of thought and leaves him almost beyond speech.

Gascar's narrator is assigned to a detail that takes care of a little cemetery molded with pick and shovel for French soldiers who have died: "We were a team of ghosts returning every morning to a green peaceful place, we were workers in death's garden." In a small way "death's garden" is also life's, for with solemn attentiveness the men who work there preserve the civilizing rituals of burial through which mankind has traditionally tried to give some dignity to the death of its members. Gradually signs of another kind of death assault these men, death cut off from either natural process or social ritual. The French prisoners working in their little graveyard cannot help seeing imprisoned Jews of a nearby village go about their wretched tasks. One morning they find "a man lying dead by the roadside on the way to the graveyard" who has "no distinguishing mark, save the armlet with the star of David"; and as they dig new graves for their French comrades, they discover "the arm of [a] corpse . . . pink . . . like certain roots." Their cemetery, with its carefully "idealized dead," is actually in "the middle of a charnel, a heap of corpses lying side by side. . . ." And then the trains come, with their stifled cries, "the human voice, hovering over the infinite expanse of suffering like a bird over the infinite sea." As in Claude Lanzmann's great film *Shoah*, the trains go back and forth, endlessly, in one direction filled with broken human creatures, and in the other empty. Death without coffins, without reasons, without rituals, without witnesses: the realization floods into the consciousness of the narrator and a few other prisoners. "Death can never appease this pain; this stream of black grief will flow forever"—so the narrator tells himself. No explanation follows, no consolation. There is only the enlarging grief of discovery, with the concluding sentence: "I went back to my dead"—both kinds, surely. And nothing else.

After. In a long story, "A Plaque on Via Mazzini," the Italian-Jewish writer Giorgio Bassani adopts as his narrative voice the amiable coarseness of a commonplace citizen of Ferrara, the north Italian town that before the war had 400 Jews, 183 of whom were deported. One of them comes back, in August 1945: Geo Josz, bloated with the fat of endema starvation, with hands "callused beyond all belief, but with white backs where a registration number, tattooed a bit over the right wrist . . . could be read distinctly, all five numbers, preceded by the letter J." Not unsympathetic but intent upon going about their business, the citizens of Ferrara speak through the narrator: "What did he want, now?" Ferrara does not know what to make of this survivor, unnerving in his initial quiet, with his "obsessive, ill-omened face" and his bursts of sarcasm. In his attic room Josz papers all four walls with pictures of his family, which was destroyed in Buchenwald. When he meets an uncle who had fawned upon the fascists, he lets out "a shrill cry, ridiculously, hysterically passionate, almost savage." Encountering a broken-down old count who had spied for the fascist police, he slaps him twice—it's not so much his presence that Josz finds unbearable as his whistling "Lili Marlene."

AS IF INTENT upon making everyone uncomfortable, Josz resumes "wearing the same clothes he had been wearing when he came back from Germany . . . fur hat and leather jerkin included." Even the warmhearted conclude:

> It was impossible . . . to converse with a man in costume! And on the other hand, if they let him do the talking, he immediately started telling about . . . the end of all his relatives; and he went on like that for whole hours, until you didn't know how to get away from him.

A few years later Josz disappears, forever, "leaving not the slightest trace after him." The Ferrarese, remembering him for a little while, "would shake their heads good-naturedly," saying, "If he had only been a bit more patient." What Geo Josz thinks or feels, what he remembers or wants, what boils up within him after returning to his town, Bassani never tells. There is no need to. Bassani sees this bit of human wreckage from a cool distance, charting the gap between Josz and those who encounter him on the street or at a café, no doubt wishing him well, but naturally, in their self-preoccupation, unable to enter his memories or obsessions. His very presence is a reproach, and what, if anything, they can do to reply or assuage they do not know. For they are ordinary people and he . . . . The rest seeps up between the words.

Aftermath. On the face of it, "My Quarrel with Hersh Rasseyner," by the Yiddish writer Chaim Grade, is an ideological dialogue between a badly shaken skeptic, evidently the writer himself, and a zealous believer, Hersh Rasseyner, who belongs to the Mussarist sect, "a movement that gives special importance to ethical and ascetic elements in Judaism." But the voices of the two speakers—as they meet across a span of years from 1937 to 1948—are so charged with passion and sincerity that we come to feel close to both of them.

Like Grade himself, the narrator had been a Mussarist in his youth, only to abandon the Yeshiva for a career as a secular writer. Yet something of the Yeshiva's training in dialectic has stuck to the narrator, though Grade is shrewd enough to give the stronger voice to Hersh Rasseyner, his orthodox antagonist. What they are arguing about, presumably, are eternal questions of faith and skepticism—the possibility of divine benevolence in the evil of His creation, the value of clinging to faith after a Holocaust that His hand did not stop. In another setting all this might seem an intellectual exercise, but here, as these two men confront one another, their dispute signifies nothing less than the terms upon which they might justify their lives. For Hersh Rasseyner the gas chambers are the inevitable outcome of a trivialized worldliness and an enfeebled morality that lacks the foundation of faith. For the narrator, the gas chambers provoke unanswerable questions about the place of a God who has remained silent. Back and forth the argument rocks, with Hersh Rasseyner usually on the attack, for he is untroubled by doubt, while the narrator can only say: "You have a ready answer, while we have not silenced our doubts, and perhaps we will never be able to silence them." With "a cry of impotent anger against heaven"—a heaven in which he does not believe but to which he continues to speak—the narrator finally offers his hand to Hersh Rasseyner in a gesture of forlorn comradeship: "We are the remnant . . ."

In its oppressive intensity and refusal to rest with any fixed "position," Grade's story makes us realize that even the most dreadful event in history has brought little change in the thought of mankind. History may spring endless surprises, but our responses are very limited. In the years after the Holocaust

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there was a certain amount of speculation that human consciousness could no longer be what it had previously been. (A consoling thought—but for the likelihood that it is not true.) Exactly what it might mean to say that after the Holocaust consciousness has been transformed is very hard to say. Neither of Grade's figures—nor, to be honest, the rest of us—shows any significant sign of such a transformation. For good and bad, we remain the commonplace human stock, and whatever it is that we may do about the Holocaust we shall have to do with the worn historical consciousness received from mankind's past. In Grade's story, as in other serious fictions touching upon the Holocaust, there is neither throb of consolation nor peal of redemption, nothing but an anxious turning toward and away from what our century has left us.

VII.

THE MIND rebels against such conclusions. It yearns for compensations it knows cannot be found; it yearns for tokens of transcendence in the midst of torment. To suppose that some redemptive salvage can be eked out of the Holocaust is, as we like to say, only human. And that is one source of the falsity that seeps through a good many accounts of the Holocaust, whether fiction or memoir—as it seeps through the language of many high-minded commentators. "To talk of despair," writes Albert Camus, "is to conquer it." Is it now? "The destiny of the Jewish people, whom no earthly power has ever been able to defeat"—so speaks a character in Jean-François Steiner's novel about a revolt in Treblinka. Perhaps appropriate for someone urging fellow prisoners into a doomed action, such sentiments, if allowed to determine the moral scheme of Holocaust writing, lead to a posture of self-delusion. The plain and bitter truth is that while Hitler did not manage to complete the "Final Solution," he did manage to destroy an entire Jewish world.

"It is foolish," writes Primo Levi, "to think that human justice can eradicate" the crimes of Auschwitz. Or that the human imagination can encompass and transfigure them. Some losses cannot be made up, neither in time nor eternity. They can only be mourned. In a poem entitled "Written in Pencil in the Sealed Freight Car," the Israeli poet Don Pagis writes:

Here in this transport
I Eve
and Abel my son
if you should see my older son
Cain son of man
tell him that I

Cry to heaven or cry to earth: that sentence will never be completed.

NERD ON THE STREET

Trading Secrets: Seduction and Scandal at The Wall Street Journal by R. Foster Winans

(St. Martin's Press, 320 pp., $17.95)

It would be hard to find a more improbable conspirator for a Wall Street stock scam than R. Foster Winans. A disheveled college dropout and perennial screwup, Winans managed to land a job as co-author of the *Wall Street Journal*'s influential stock market column "Heard on the Street" after a brief stint as a lowly Dow Jones news-ticker slave. Although Winans worked hard, he displayed an unfortunate tendency to garble his facts and lived in perpetual fear of his disapproving editors. Winans also showed an amiable disregard for his paper's starchy decorum. He would show up for work in scuffed up loafers and a tattered $28 blue blazer. He was the office purveyor of tasteless jokes. When he called sources on the phone, he would announce, "It's Foster, Nerd on the Street."

Small wonder that so many people at the *Journal* were shocked two years ago to discover that this bumbling naïf had been systematically leaking the contents of "Heard" columns to a ring of insider traders, thereby precipitating a scandal that deeply embarrassed the country's most prestigious business newspaper. The Winans affair is among the most sensational of the insider trading cases that have convulsed Wall Street in recent years, and in some ways it is the most disturbing. It has led to a potentially dangerous expansion of powers by the Securities and Exchange Commission and raised troubling questions about the uneasy relationship between the markets and the media. Those questions loom even larger now that a repentant Winans has told his story. Its author's moral taint notwithstanding, this book is a riveting account that offers a revealing glimpse into the warped ethos of Wall Street and the sometimes sleazy side of financial journalism.

It is now more than five years since the SEC threatened to come crashing down on insider traders "with hobnail boots." Of all Reagan administration regulatory policies, few have been more universally applauded; probably none have proved more futile. It has been illegal for some time to trade stocks or options based on material information (such as an imminent corporate takeover) that has not been disclosed to the public. The SEC's admirable rationale for stepping up enforcement and stiffening penalties is that the perception of rampant insider trading undermines public confidence in the financial markets. The Wall Street casino begins to look like a crap game with loaded dice.

The problem is that it is sometimes hard to see how the public can think otherwise. The takeover boom of the mid-1980s—another byproduct of Reagan administration policies—has paradoxically pushed the value of inside information through the roof, creating fantastic new opportunities for those who learn about acquisitions ahead of the pack. This year's revelations about investment banker Dennis Levine and his network of financial tipsters are only the most obvious evidence of abuse. Far more sinister are murky transactions that are often accepted as part of the game. Stock prices are frequently run up prior to the announcement of major tender offers, a good sign that somebody has been tipped off. In the two days before the world learned that General Electric would pay $66.50 a share for RCA last December, RCA's stock suddenly soared from $48.75 to $63.50. And as was recently reported by my colleague David Vise in the *Wash-*

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ington Post, the price of CBS stock shot up more than $20 last February two days after oil billionaire Marvin Davis made a secret offer to CBS chairman Thomas H. Wyman to buy the company. Why do these things happen? Lucky guesses?

Clearly, not all money on Wall Street is made from illegal insider trading. Most comes from a combination of shrewd analysis, keen instincts, and dumb luck. But the hunger for information—in reality, information ahead of the herd—is central to the psychology of the market, a point Winans makes nicely. As he perceptively if somewhat cynically notes: "The value of knowledge is inversely diminished by the number of people who have access to it. In other words, the only reason to invest in the market is because you think you know something others don't."

It is against this backdrop that Winans introduces a juicy rogues' gallery of characters, none more roguish than his principal co-conspirator, a fabulously wealthy stockbroker named Peter Brant, who "shuffled in a day as much capital as the average American family might expect to earn in a generation." In Brant, Winans introduces the prototype of the mindless yuppie materialist. A dashing superstar for the established brokerage firm of Kidder Peabody, Brant changed his name from Bornstein to disguise his Jewish heritage, racked up millions by the age of 30, and then reveled in the extravagances of WASP society. He played polo, hunted pheasant, and commuted by helicopter from his estate on Long Island's North Shore. He ridiculed the "crybaby traders" who lacked his magic touch in the market. Winans was mesmerized. "[Brant] was my Jay Gatsby," he writes, "and I was progressively more interested in what this elegant young roughneck really was about."

AT A BIZARRE rendezvous at the New York Racquet Club, Brant allegedly proposed that Winans tip him off to upcoming "Heard" columns so the two could split the resulting profits. (While acting as a source for Winans, Brant had noticed the column's market clout: a favorable reference to a particular stock could send the price soaring and vice versa.) Why did Winans go along? Because he was hard up (he was earning a pitiful $575 a week at the time); his seedy Manhattan tenement was going co-op; his lover, David Carpenter, on whom he doted, was facing steep dental expenses. And on top of this, Winans, the outsider, had become enthralled by the larcenous, get-rich-quick culture of Wall Street. No alarm bells went off. "Something in me had warped," he says.

As it turned out, Brant proved more adept at social climbing than he did at conspiracy. Indeed, there is more Keystone Kops to this story than Robert Vesco. Brant foolishly enlarged the circle to bring in another Kidder Peabody broker and a high-powered client. Then he traded so heavily in stocks touted by the "Heard" columns that investigators were soon alerted. "Fewer people would have noted what Peter was doing if he'd hired a skywriter," writes Winans.

Meanwhile, Winans didn't do any better at subterfuge. Brant gave him the code name "Howard Cohen" to use when he called Kidder Peabody offices with his tips. Winans would forget it and have to be reminded by Brant's secretary. It is also somewhat pathetic to learn that of the nearly $700,000 in illicit profits earned from his information, Winans saw only about $31,000.

Winans, who was convicted last year

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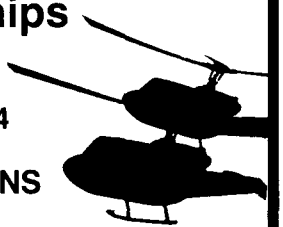

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on 49 counts of conspiracy and fraud, is today working in an AIDS clinic while appealing his case to the Supreme Court. He writes that he now fully accepts his moral, as opposed to legal, guilt and he leaves little doubt about the humiliation he suffered when his deeds were finally uncovered. It is hard not to cringe at Winans's description of the sheer, stark terror he experienced the day he was suddenly called up to the office of the *Journal*'s managing editor, Norman Pearlstine: he thinks at first he is about to get a raise, but discovers instead that Pearlstine is waiting for him with the paper's general counsel. "In a few minutes John Fedders of the SEC will be calling us here," he is told. "He has some questions he wants to ask you."

Winans says he went home that night, his heart throbbing and his body shivering, and contemplated suicide:

> Suddenly the shelter I'd built of all my rationalizations in the past six months caved in on top of me. I thought about Gary Putka [his best friend at the paper and co-author of the "Heard" column]. We had talked about not investing in the market. But this was worse. This was unthinkable. Just about the grossest ethical violation I could think of.... In an instant, like a nuclear blast, my career had been vaporized.

There is always a certain morbid fascination in watching a career self-destruct. But as gripping as Winans's tale is, and as likable as he can sometimes seem, it's difficult to sustain sympathy for him (even forgetting for the moment the lucrative movie deal he recently signed). A cloying, self-serving tone creeps into the narrative. Winans too often provides lame excuses—his concern for Carpenter's welfare, for example—and makes meaningless distinctions—he says he never took outright "bribes" for stories, only a share of the profits. And he insists he never falsified his columns. (Of course he didn't. That might have screwed up his investments.) The subtitle of the book implies a "seduction" of Winans by Brant, but Winans needed no seducing. Before he and Brant ever met, Winans instructed Carpenter to set up a Merrill Lynch account so the two could invest in a medical stock that Winans was touting in the "Heard" column—a rather gross violation of journalistic ethics. And when the scheme with Brant did get under way, Winans was hardly a casual participant. He was continually darting to a pay phone across the street from the *Journal* to tip off Brant out of earshot of his newsroom colleagues.

BUT OTHERS in the story do not emerge unscathed either—least of all the *Journal*. After all, it was the *Journal* that hired this underqualified journeyman, failed to check his references, paid him a miserly $28,000 salary (far below New York journalism standards), and then entrusted him with the most sensitive feature in the paper. When the *Journal* discovered the betrayal, it turned on Winans with a vengeance—and in the process violated its own standards of fair play, not to mention those of the rest of the profession. The paper's personnel department turned over Winans's confidential file to the paper's reporters, who freely mined it for embarrassing details. The *Journal*'s first sensational front-page story on the case, published on April 2, 1984, disclosed intimate and largely irrelevant facts about Winans's relationship with Carpenter.

Even more pertinent is the question of what purpose "Heard on the Street" was serving in the first place. "Heard" is, at bottom, a tipster column, designed not to report general economic trends but to alert investors to market developments affecting the price of particular stocks. In practice, the "reporting" for this sort of thing inevitably means tracking down a blizzard of tips, gossip, and rumors, frequently passed on by analysts, money managers, and other Wall Street sources who have a financial stake in the stocks they are touting or debunking. Winans introduces some of these shady characters, such as Eddie the Weasel, a convicted stock fraud artist who periodically surfaced with inside dope on obscure companies, and the bears who fed Winans and other financial journalists leads on supposedly overpriced stocks and then sold short. "As stock market writers, we knew we were being used all the time," writes Winans.

To be sure, the *Journal* has defended dealing with the Weasels of the world by insisting that each "tip" be independently verified by the paper's reporters. But when you're dealing with the crazy psychology of the stock market, where's the check? Winans writes that the measure of "success" for a "Heard" column was whether the stock in fact moved in the direction the column predicted—that supposedly "proved" that the market gossip published was backed up by solid reporting. The problem is that the whole premise of the Winans case is that "Heard" columns themselves influenced stock prices. That seems to invalidate the success test. More than one journalist has wondered whether any newspaper, much less the respected *Journal*, should be in the business of helping its sources make a quick killing.

The difficulty of defining just what insider trading means in such an environment is one reason some responsible authorities have raised questions about the government's case against Winans. Strictly speaking, Winans possessed no "inside" or non-public information; everything he learned as a reporter could have been culled by any investor who plugged into the same gossip network. So under a novel theory that has alarmed many First Amend-

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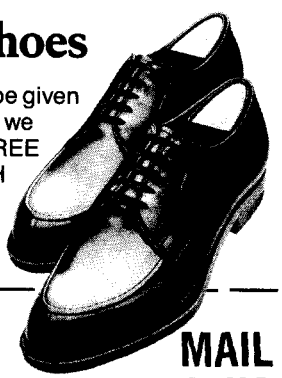

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ment scholars, Winans was prosecuted instead for "misappropriating" information owned by the *Journal* and violating the paper's written conflict-of-interest policy. (He claims he never saw the policy, but there is no doubt he was aware of it.) Is it really the government's job to enforce the policies of a newspaper?

There is, of course, an exquisite irony here. No institution has railed more loudly against the menace of federal regulation than the *Wall Street Journal*. Yet it took the SEC to clean up the *Journal*'s shop. And now, because of its inability to regulate one of its own employees, the paper has opened the door for federal intrusion into every newsroom in America.

MICHAEL ISIKOFF

Michael Isikoff is a reporter for the business section of the *Washington Post*.

A POET IN STALIN'S WINTER

Marina Tsvetaeva: The Woman, Her World, and Her Poetry by Simon Karlinsky

(Cambridge University Press, 289 pp., $44.50, $15.95 paper)

In the late '50s I was a student at a provincial Soviet university. There were a few of us, myself and some friends, who were interested in history and literature. The entire university system was set up so that we would learn as little as possible about authentic history and authentic literature. But gradually, with difficulty and at no small risk, we began to dig down and unearth and understand something of them. Books that had survived the time of the Stalin pogroms, typewritten copies of poems, émigré editions—all were passed from hand to hand. Sometimes we even met people who had witnessed and remembered the distant past.

The history of the country that was revealed to us, little by little, was so devastating that it often seemed it would be better to know nothing at all about it. (We did indeed want, in the words of Stephen Dedalus, to awake from the nightmare.) Fortunately there was a counterbalance. In the same measure that the history was nightmarish, the literature was magnificent. The only realities in that unreal age were the murdered writers—Gumiliov, Mandelstam, Zamiatin, Bulgakov, Platonov. Each of them brought a fragment of meaning to that time. And possibly the greatest discovery of them all was Marina Tsvetaeva.

In the beginning we read her piecemeal. Mistakes and blank spaces were plentiful in the samizdat copies. Those lucky enough to light on a poem by Tsvetaeva in one of the pre-Revolutionary journals (which were hard to come by) or one of the émigré journals (which were almost impossible to come by) often simply learned it by heart. We had no copying machines, and serious and unpleasant consequences awaited people caught transcribing forbidden books. Anna Akhmatova (one of the few of Tsvetaeva's friends to live to see the Thaw) called it the pre-Gutenberg period.

Tsvetaeva's poetry astounded even those already familiar with other Russian poets. It was compressed and intense to the uttermost limit, and sometimes it exceeded all limits. She always spoke directly, regardless of the conventions of a period or a school. If there is a poetry that can be said to embody freedom, it is Tsvetaeva's poetry.

Pasternak had written words then that we read later (also in samizdat):

> Tsvetaeva had an active, virile, militant soul, resolute and indomitable. Both in art and in life she had an eager and avid, almost a rapacious need for definition and finality, and in pursuing this she outstripped everyone else. Apart from her few known works she wrote many others, which are unknown in Russia, huge, stormy compositions. . . . Their publication will be a triumph and a revelation for our native poetry which, in a single moment, will be enriched by all these overdue gifts.

It is not difficult to guess that this moment has not yet come in Russia. Tsvetaeva's books are printed there, but like many Soviet books they are intended for export; on the Moscow black market, if you can find them, they cost two months' wages. Tsvetaeva's immense legacy—lyric verse, long poems, plays, prose pieces—are printed in their entirety only in New York. (The American edition does find its way into the U.S.S.R., and I understand how the young people reading it there now must feel.)

LIKE HER poetry, Tsvetaeva's destiny stands out against the background of the age. Probably all Russian biographies of that time were unusual, but Tsvetaeva's biography was something like an adventure novel that grew into a classical tragedy. She was born in 1892 into the respectable family of a professor, the founder of the finest museum in Moscow. The world of her youth was the world of half-literary, half-philosophical, wholly fashionable circles, a kind of Russian Bloomsbury. It is possible that she would have spent her entire life in that world, dividing her time between literary activities, ironic conversations, and love affairs. That is, she would have been a Russian Virginia Woolf—if the Revolution, which she expected and called for in her youth, had not taken place.

Tsvetaeva wrote prolifically, and she was almost immediately noticed. She married a failure, one Sergei Efron, whom she adored her whole life; and she fell stormily in love with many people, including Pasternak, Rilke, and several women. After the Revolution, Efron found himself in the White Army. Tsvetaeva stayed in Moscow and tried to work at the People's Commissariat of Nationalities (headed, incidentally, by the little-known Bolshevik Joseph Stalin). She found herself entirely incapable of concocting bureaucratic papers. She starved, she lost her little daughter, she read her poetry at literary evenings, praising the czar and the White Guard. That she survived at all is proof of the relative tolerance of the regime at that time. In 1922 she and her elder daughter managed to emigrate and join her husband.

In Berlin, Prague, and Paris, Tsvetaeva wrote no less prolifically than she had in Russia. She became a poet of exceptional originality and unprecedented variety. Often she was far from making common cause with the Russian émigrés; often she held back from publishing her work. ("Poetry makes no sense to the audience. It is an obligation of honor.") Most

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Western writers, her contemporaries, had not the slightest idea of her existence.

In the early '30s she again led a hard life, almost like life in Moscow after the Revolution, less hungry but significantly more solitary. At that time Efron began working for a society set up to organize the return of émigrés to Russia, and soon became an out-and-out agent of the Soviet secret police. (Tsvetaeva did not know this.) He became mixed up in a political murder and had to escape from the West to the Soviet Union, at the height of the Stalin purges. Tsvetaeva's daughter Ariadna returned to the Soviet Union, too.

Unlike her husband and daughter, however, Tsvetaeva understood the Soviet Union very well. She followed them there only to witness their arrest. (Sergei died, and Ariadna spent more than 15 years in camps and in exile.) At the beginning of the war Tsvetaeva was living in a small town not far from the Urals; she tried to earn a living washing dishes but failed. As far as we know, she was no longer writing. On August 31, 1941, she hanged herself. (Her distant Western double Virginia Woolf had put an end to her life five months earlier.)

SIMON KARLINSKY was the first Western scholar to study Tsvetaeva seriously. He has been instrumental in recovering her work for new readers. After her death Tsvetaeva was forgotten. Her old editions gathered dust on the shelves of émigré bookstores, her papers were neglected, and her biography was full of mysterious gaps. A volume of selected prose appeared only in 1953 in New York. (Vladimir Nabokov was asked to write the foreword; he refused, claiming that he valued Tsvetaeva very highly as a poet but he could not forgive her connection with the Soviet secret police.) For many years Karlinsky's book *Marina Tsvetaeva: Her Life and Art*, published in 1966, was the only monograph on the poet. Now it has been so thoroughly revised that it must be considered a new book altogether. An immense amount of material, often bordering on the sensational, is presented here. The book stands as the most authoritative biography of Tsvetaeva not only in English but in any language.

Karlinsky writes with sensitivity and understanding about those aspects of Tsvetaeva's life that have remained shadowy and unspoken until now—her bitter childhood, her disastrous family life, her unconventional erotic experiences, her pride, her narcissism (which did much to contribute to her loneliness). Moreover, Karlinsky realizes, better than many Slavists, and far better than most people in the West, how free and fruitful the atmosphere in Russia was during the pre-Revolutionary years, and how hideous the destruction of this atmosphere was under Lenin and Stalin.

UNFORTUNATELY, Tsvetaeva's biography somewhat overshadows the treatment of her poetry and prose in Karlinsky's book. The poetry (and to a somewhat lesser degree, the prose) is almost completely lost in the translations. For readers who know her only in a literal translation, Tsvetaeva may prove disappointing. They will be unable to understand why those who know the Russian language—Joseph Brodsky and many others—consider her one of the best poets (if not the best poet) of the 20th century. To a great extent Tsvetaeva is a linguist's poet. She can be compared to Auden in her irony and civic spirit, and she is almost like Cummings in her treatment of language. In her poetry there is meaning not only in each word, but in each syllable and each phoneme. For her, words are close in meaning simply by being close to one another in the dictionary; language creates its own laws of life. In short, Tsvetaeva's poetry *is* the Russian language, grasped in all its potential, its highest expression.

The poets Akhmatova and Mandelstam, Tsvetaeva's contemporaries and friends, overcame the obscurity and high-flown eloquence of Symbolism by restoring the rights of the thing and the object. But Tsvetaeva is not a poet of the thing. She is, rather, a poet of the body—"of the pharynx and the diaphragm," in her words. The mature Akhmatova and Mandelstam became poets of memory, guardians of a tradition and a culture in a world that had lost its connection with its own past. Tsvetaeva remained a poet not of memory, but of the ecstatic. She was constantly striving to break bounds—the bounds of words, the bounds of stanzas, the bounds of verse, the bounds of art. Hence the fusing and joining of words, the breaking down of words into parts, the recurrent hyphenation, the ruptures in the middle of a phrase, the echoes between one verse and another, and finally the transformation of the poetic text into life. She lived as she wrote, constructing her biography according to the laws of

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art. Nothing in her life had the right to stagnate, to become cliché, to subside into a pre-established form. But even in her most ecstatic moments she knew how to make demands on herself. Not for nothing is her best essay called "Art in the Light of Conscience."

WITH EVERY year Tsvetaeva changed her way of writing. Beginning with intimate poems, sometimes of dubious taste, she passed through a period of classical simplicity, a period of elevated biblical and mythological style comparable to the style of Milton or Racine, and reached an utterly unique poetics based on interruption and ellipsis. She took her rhythms from classical poetry, from the 18th century, from Russian folklore, without embarrassment. "I am many poets," she declared in a letter to one of her correspondents, the critic Yury Ivask. At each bend in the road she lost readers who were unable to develop at the same speed.

Finally her only audience was other poets, of whom perhaps only Pasternak understood her well. She wrote to her disciple Nikolai Gronsky: "To grow to your own size and then to outgrow it—such is the poet's gambit." She followed this rule strictly, accepting its consequences in full even to the point of incommunicability and death. According to Tsvetaeva, the poet's calling is to live more intensely than others, as though for and beyond everyone, for the expiation of all. Her experience makes one think that there is perhaps a profound connection between the demands of language and the demands of ethics.

Tsvetaeva destroyed both literary and social taboos with unusual boldness. But one taboo she would not break, and in this respect she was different from most people of her time. She was always on the side of the vanquished—a White Guard, a Red Army soldier, Pushkin, a Czech under the occupation of Hitler, or the deposed Czar Nicholas II. Like Dostoyevsky's heroes, she did not accept life as it was given to her. She was a poet of extremes, of black and white. And also of red; but her red was not the color of the Revolution, it was the color of innocent blood spilled.

She was idiosyncratic in every movement of her mind and spirit. While she was striving to reach the limits of contemporary diction in her poetry, she clung to the most conservative views and she loved old Europe—the Europe of the Middle Ages and of Casanova. It is hardly surprising that such dissimilar people as Mandelstam and Trotsky attacked her in print at the same time and in similar terms. "She was somehow too far left and too far right at the same time," Karlinsky writes. I would add that she was in truth too high—in another dimension where the relativity of all our dichotomies and categories stands revealed. She hated, above all, the idea of a civilization built on the laws of statistics, and on the pre-eminence of naked power. She hated the machine, the machine of the state in particular. Karlinsky offers some telling quotations from her essays: "Politics is a self-evident abomination, from which nothing but further abominations should be expected"; "[It is] something that is evidently not human, not animal and not divine, which destroys in a person the human, the animal and the divinity"; "Oh, if only politicians wouldn't stand between the poet and the people!"

And still politicians stand between the poet and the people. Yet the Soviet Union's long taboo on Tsvetaeva's life story seems to be lifting. Tass recently announced that a biography of the poet, written by Anna Saakyants, a literary historian, is about to be published. It is impossible to stifle a culture forever. Had Tsvetaeva lived, she would probably have repeated the wish she expressed 60 years ago, in 1926: "For myself—a separate room and a writing desk, for Russia—whatever she herself wants."

TOMAS VENCLOVA

Tomas Venclova is assistant professor of Russian literature at Yale University.

INSIDE, OUTSIDE

The View from Nowhere by Thomas Nagel

(Oxford University Press, 244 pp., $19.95)

In writing this remarkable book, Thomas Nagel has succeeded in combining qualities that are rarely found together. Its aims are intellectually ambitious, and their achievement involves the unqualified repudiation of cherished views held by many of Nagel's more or less eminent contemporaries. Yet the execution of these aims is marked by an engaging intellectual modesty. Nagel's treatment of his subject is highly professional, but he engages with precisely those philosophical doubts and anxieties that the reflective non-professional may be supposed to feel, and that are often inadequately dealt with by those whose professional business is philosophy.

Nagel sees all the many questions he discusses as aspects of a single problem: the problem of how to combine an internal, or subjective, view of the world with an external, or objective, view that seeks to explain, and where necessary to correct, the former. Each of us views the world, and plans and acts within it, from a particular personal perspective. But each of us has, to some degree, the capacity to transcend his personal perspective, and to strive to see things as they really are, or are in themselves.

The aim of total transcendence, of the attainment of a completely objective view, is seen by many contemporary (as well as by some past) philosophers as illusory. They hold that it makes no sense to speak of a reality beyond what we can in principle think (or speak) about. All such views are characterized by Nagel as varieties of idealism, including the widespread scientism that limits the real to what is comprehensible by one type of human understanding, the kind that yields physical and biological theory. So Wittgenstein, Quine, Davidson, and others appear, in different ways, as idealists, while Nagel appears as an unrepentant realist. At the same time, however, Nagel points out that the pursuit of objectivity has its risks. In particular, he emphasizes the risk of excluding those irreducibly real features of the world that belong essentially to the subjective realm, such as conscious experience itself. The task, as already noted, is one of

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integration. Nagel records his sense of its difficulty ("I believe that the methods needed to understand ourselves do not yet exist") and of his own insufficiency ("I do not feel equal to the problems treated in this book").

An obvious first step in the pursuit of objectivity is the recognition that the ways in which physical things appear to us are in part the consequence of our own human constitution. This recognition leads to the distinction between primary and secondary qualities, and the exclusion of the latter from our conception of the physical world—a fruitful step, leading in turn to an immense extension of scientific knowledge. But it also leads, derivatively, to those reductionist theories of the mind that attempt to force mental phenomena into the framework of physical theory, and thus sin against the reality of subjectivity. Nagel suggests that, while avoiding this risk, we can achieve a greater measure of objectivity in our conception of the mental by allowing the possibility of other types of conscious experience than our own—by forming, in short, a general concept of mind.

YET A SHADOW of this same risk seems to hang over Nagel's own treatment of the mind-body problem. It is true that he distinguishes sharply between mental and physical properties or aspects; true, too, that he rightly dismisses the pseudo-solution of inventing a special soul-substance to be the bearer of mental properties. He favors, ostensibly, a Double Aspect theory, that is, a theory according to which the mental and the physical are distinct types of attribute of a single unitary subject. Yet the genuineness of the distinction on which he formally insists comes into question when he accepts, as he does, the *identity* of mental with physical processes and, in effect, the *identity* of mind and brain. There are forms of Double Aspect theory that, while freely acknowledging the physical basis of mind, involve no such identification—that make the person, the rational animal, the subject of mental processes as well as the owner of that physical organ, the brain, on which they necessarily depend. Nagel instances action as having both mental and physical aspects. It is the man, not his brain, who we normally say speaks, thinks, feels, and acts. No doubt it is insufficient to appeal to the way in which we normally speak; but it is un-

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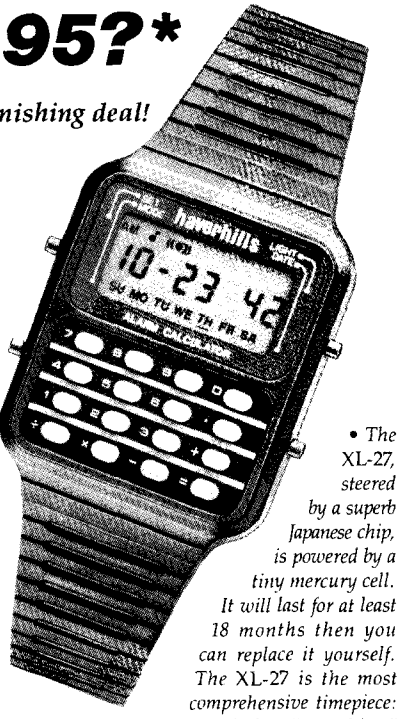

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wise to ignore it.

The pursuit of objectivity has a further, curious consequence, regarding self-identity, which Nagel remarks on. A person's objective view represents that person himself, with all his empirical characteristics, as simply one insignificant part of the world of which, from the objective standpoint, he takes a detached view. And yet the detached viewer (the "objective self," as Nagel calls him) is identical with that insignificant part (the "subjective self"). Nagel is struck by the sense of strangeness that this combination of opposition and identity, placing us "both inside and outside the world," may engender.

There are yet more radical consequences to be considered. The aim of objectivity is to get a true view of reality by discounting and explaining those features of its appearances that are in part attributable merely to the particularities of the human perspective. But whatever degree of success we achieve in this endeavor—as in the case of primary and secondary qualities—the resulting conception will still depend, in part at least, on "an unexamined subjective base." This fact lies at the foundation of philosophical skepticism. Since it is an ultimate fact, such skepticism is ultimately irrefutable: reality might be utterly different from any conception we can form of it.

Of all possible reactions to this truth, the least popular is a simple acquiescence in the skeptical conclusion. Currently the most popular is to embrace one or another of those reductive theories that Nagel has already characterized as varieties of idealism, which attempt "to cut the universe down to [a comfortable] size" by circumscribing what there is within the limits of our own best, working concepts. Nagel's realism makes any such move unacceptable to him. Rather, he agrees with Kant in holding that "how things are in themselves transcends all possible appearances or human conceptions." But the agreement is not unqualified. Though there "probably," indeed "almost certainly," exist features of reality that we cannot, and never could, conceive of, this very possibility sets a standard of reality that some of the features we do have a conception of, and take to be real, may also meet; and it is reasonable to suppose that some of them do so.

There is, evidently, an understandable element of hedging here. In the face of the irrefutability of skepticism, and the near certainty of transcendence, we should nevertheless do the best we can in the pursuit of objectivity, in the reasonable hope that our efforts will, at some level, be rewarded with the prize of partial contact with the real. Indeed, for Nagel, this is more than a reasonable hope. It is a firm belief, though his arguments do not always entitle him to it.

FROM PROBLEMS of knowledge and reality Nagel turns to those of freedom and responsibility on the one hand, ethics and value on the other. Here, though in contrasting ways, half-measures are ruled out. One who achieves a maximally objective view feeds more and more of his circumstances and himself into the world from which, as "objective self," he is detached. But then he leaves nothing of himself to be the truly autonomous author of his actions. The belief that accompanies the phenomenologically undeniable sense of freedom is thus left without content. And the loss of the illusion of freedom carries with it the loss of the illusion of responsibility. To this conclusion the truth or falsity of determinism is irrelevant. The fact that we are, for the most part, practically committed to attitudes with which this conclusion is in conflict is not, in Nagel's eyes, a solution to the problem. It is merely evidence of its intractability. He concludes: "It seems to me that nothing approaching the truth has yet been said on this subject." But why does he not conclude that the ultimate irreconcilability of external and internal perspectives *is* the truth?

With values, things are different. It is an objective, general, and impersonal truth that anyone who currently has certain desires or preferences has a reason for acting in a way that will in fact satisfy those desires and preferences, whether he knows what this reason is or not. Here we have "the thin end of the objective wedge." The first and simplest step to further generality (or objectivity) is taken by recognizing that prudential reasons may be seen rationally to outweigh those generated by current desires. But these, too, though their acknowledgment is general and impersonal, are acknowledged only as agent-relative or *personal* reasons, reasons for the agent.

The decisive ethical step is taken when it is recognized that certain general conditions (such as freedom from or suffering of pain, access or lack of access to resources, and so on) generate *impersonal* or agent-neutral reasons for promoting or diminishing them, that is, reasons that anybody has in relation to anybody else and not merely in relation to himself. This move to a yet more objective or detached standpoint is the crucial move in Nagel's defense of ethical objectivity, or ethical realism. Not that he thinks that the truth, or even the possibility, of ethical realism can be proved. But he does think, and argues persuasively, that the most favored attempts to prove its impossibility are defective, because they rely upon an inappropriate model of objective truth.

Nagel does not proceed, having taken the matter thus far, to set out a "full ethical theory." But he does make some unusually interesting and substantial suggestions about the shape that such a theory might plausibly take, particularly as regards the degree to which moral judgment of an action in the light of its likely consequences for human happiness should be constrained by other values, e.g., by the belief that certain types of action are morally unacceptable in any circumstances whatever. Nagel concludes his moral theorizing with a discussion of the appearance, and reality, of conflict between the demands of morality and those of the "good life" (that is, the full, integrated, and satisfying individual life). This apparent conflict cannot be resolved, he argues, by defining the moral life in terms of the good life or

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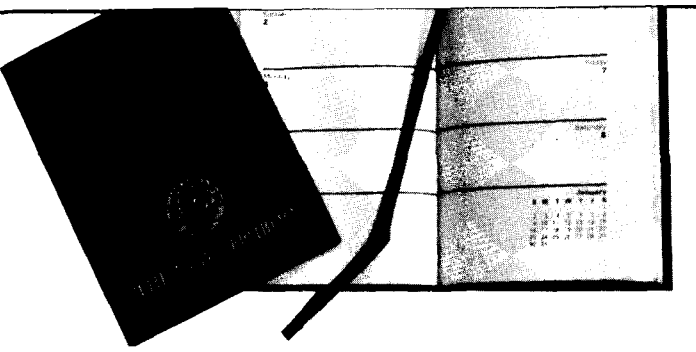
vice versa. (Aristotle is said to have done the former, Plato the latter.) The conflict is too real for that. Should we, then, rationally award priority to the moral life (Kant) or the good life (Nietzsche) or to neither (most of us)? Nagel's solution is, roughly, that it is rational to dilute the demands of morality with a measure of tolerance of personal human predilections that may conflict with those demands—but he adds that supererogatory virtue (as manifested, for instance, in acts of self-sacrifice that go *beyond* the call of duty) is, though not required, not irrational. Ethics, he says finally, leads to politics, of which the certainly utopian aim should be to arrange society so that a life both good and moral is a possibility for everyone.

In his concluding chapter (entitled "Birth, Death, and the Meaning of Life") Nagel confronts, more fully than before, the intellectual-emotional consequences of the pursuit of objectivity and the ineliminable inner conflicts to which it gives rise. The chapter will supremely appeal to those many who feel that philosophers should, and now do not, address the "deep" questions of life.

FROM THE external, impersonal point of view, from which one sees oneself as an utterly contingent, fleeting, and insignificant scrap of the world, one's life seems without meaning or value, one's purposes, and indeed all human purposes, absurd—a view that flatly contradicts the inescapable internal perspective. The solution of detachment from personal concerns seems to ask too high a price. The opposite choice, of full and unqualified engagement in those concerns, at least acknowledges the truth that an objective view must also recognize and comprehend the reality of the subjective view. Still, it is unsatisfactory and self-defeating, because the limiting objective view, with its sense of the absurd, is only an extension of that pursuit of relative objectivity that is an essential part of our human, especially our ethical, individuality. So the conflict really is ineliminable.

But it is reducible, or at least acceptable. It is reducible through a reasonable humility (generalized beyond one's person to the human species at large); through the practical recognition of the relative objectivity of morality; through that disinterested response to the particular that is characteristically aesthetic; through acceptance of absurdity as a part of human life, "a consequence of our ex-



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istence as creatures with a capacity for objectivity." Thus we may succeed, by a judicious mixture of engagement and detachment, in living with a conflict we cannot resolve.

Finally, death. Like Webster, Nagel is much possessed by death—not by the skull beneath the skin, but by the terrifying thought of annihilation, the expectation of nothingness. Internally it is impossible to see one's death as the insignificant incident that, externally, it is. As Rochefoucauld remarks, "*Ni le soleil ni la mort ne peuvent se regarder fixement.*" All that Nagel writes in this chapter, and indeed in the whole book, is impressive, and deeply felt. I hope it is not frivolous to say: perhaps a little more deeply than is wise or just. We are such creatures as he describes, with the doubleness of vision he insists on. Though it would be fatuous to congratulate ourselves on the fact, it is something we can live with, as we must. Recognition that this is so is perhaps the truest philosophy; and Nagel deserves our gratitude for helping us to see it.

P. F. STRAWSON

P. F. Strawson is Waynslete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy and a fellow of Magdalen College at Oxford.

CREATURE FEATURES

Cats of the Temple
by Brad Leithauser

(Knopf, 70 pp., $14.95, $7.95 paper)

The title of Brad Leithauser's new book of poems gives us fair warning. Animals abound in it, bounding, flitting, floating, or sitting still, all very much alive and wonderfully exact. Thus, the meeting of a toad and a damselfly whose torso is a "sun-enameled emerald stickpin"; a tortoise, "low-profiled plodder," albeit stuffed; a sea horse who, like the chess piece he resembles, "glides with a forking, oblique efficiency"; tigers, on a Japanese screen: "*All bloodshed is forbidden / here. . . .*"; hawks, though the poet's sympathies are with the sought-after "homely, camouflage-seeking mouse"; rabbits, whose world lacks elaborate courtship but is "flushed with piquant/concupiscent/satisfaction" (the short lines suggest hops or, more likely, brief bouts of "rabid raptured" and ruptured activity); and a splendid, Lawrentian ostrich,

> met with the offer
> of a pretzel: a pink two-toed
> stalking to the fence, there to pin
> upon the quailing child
> the enlarged, enraged glare
> of the born disciplinarian,
> while all the while the neck's
> spiral tube's atremble,
> for the bird, too, is fearful . . .

While there is something of Marianne Moore's tartness and teacherliness in the tone and the movement of the verse, its greater relaxation and more palpable humor help the poet to speak well, apparently without deliberation but with authority, about landscape and seascape, and artifacts too:

> . . . Yoroi Iwa,
> Armor Rock, the crest of a bluff
> which, just as if
> something with endless time to kill
> on this outpost island had been
> engineering an epochal
> if rather small
> joke, not only looks like armor but in
> its boxy, braided lines is closer
> to the Japanese style than
> the European.

On Japanese matters, in particular, Leithauser is a perceptive and trustworthy witness.

Even so, "Where man is not, nature is barren." No doubt nature can be richer in the absence of interfering man, but we take William Blake's point: there is nothing anywhere unless someone is there to register it, and this can't be left entirely to the animal creation. Or even to the one person always present in writing, the writer. Nature in Leithauser's verse might be even more engaging than it is if men and women were a little more to the fore. In "At Greg's" a lot of things are around—books, maps, a hash pipe, an empty donut box, dental floss—but not Greg. To which the poet might retort that Greg, a devotee of donuts, can be found amply in the novelist Leithauser's novel, *Equal Distance*, where he actually cleans between his teeth with a girl's lustrous strand of hair, left on a seat in a train between Osaka and Kyoto.

The people hinted at in "Minims" are commonplace and—well, undersized. "Given her kiss and blessing," and unable to manage without coyness's aphrodisiac, some fellow "Finds the impulse detumescing." He should consider the ways of those assiduous rabbits. And it's a feeble sort of poet who laments, "Why must gainful/Employment be so painful?" (In the author's note, acknowledgment is made to a number of foundations from whom liberating support has been gained.) Not that there is anything wrong with the minigenre as such. "Not all things at once does the Highest require," Hölderlin remarked. And neither does the Muse. Parnassus has many mansions, as Auden observed—among them, broom closets, garrets, and nasty little woodsheds. "The Fame Train" goes:

> The season's major talents are
> Roaring up the track.
> You can hear them coming: clique
> Claque, clique claque.

More substantial, more audible at any rate, is the grandfather of "A Noisy Sleeper," whose snores "go up & down/up & down like a zipper," keeping the five-year-old boy awake. Recalling that night, 25 years later with the grandfather dead some 20 years, is proof of memory's power both to bring back childish fears and to hold the old man close enough

> To overhear the rise and fall
> Of his slow breathing, just
> As though his were once more
> The sort of sleep from which—broken
> By ruminative snorts, gruff
> Assentive gasps—he could be woken.

The adjectives "ruminative" and "assentive" could hardly be improved upon in respect of fidelity.

There is rather more human interest, or interest in the human, in Leithauser's first book, *Hundreds of Fireflies*, and notably in the fine and very funny poem "Two Summer Jobs," where the narrator, earning money by working (treasonably, so to speak) as a law clerk, is put down by an arty contemporary who lives on a farm and makes pots. But then, his dad "makes pots and pots/of money in securities." Suffering from that distinguished ailment, writer's block, and un-

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able at the moment to compose anything except parodies, the narrator reflects that this is a case of

> "A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
> A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread, and Thousands in the Bank; fleeting though Riches be,
> And powerless, They comfort anyhow."

By a seeming paradox, the second most lively human in that book is a dead man, in "The Ghost of a Ghost," whose afterlife fades from a shadow to the shadow of a shadow. But we must concede that, to some extent, animals stand in for humans in both collections. The horses in *Hundreds of Fireflies*, eagerly taking the handfuls of grass you offer from your side of the fence while disdaining what grows at their feet, confirm that "the grass is always greener . . ."

MOST VIRTUES have their attendant vices, and Leithauser can irritate by a self-defeating overmeticulousness or finicky attenuation, or when the cleverness of how-it-is-said exceeds the cleverness of what-is-said, and the truth of imagination sinks into the embroidery of fancy. Nor does the Muse want too much of the same thing; sameness of manner can suggest sameness of matter. "In a Bonsai Nursery" starts off in what sounds like precocious baby talk:

> Nearly nothing
> in Nature so
> spirits the eye
> off—but off by
> way of in—to
> unveil detail
> as minimal
> as it's recep-
> tive to as does
> this more than true-
> to-life, living
> family of
> diminutive
> replicas of
> themselves . . .

That recurring "as" obscures more than it unveils. And yet—and although we might still hanker after lines slightly more sizable and less artful—it is true that the poem gathers intellectual strength as, with a nod perhaps at Ben Jonson's "In small proportions we just beauties see," it proceeds to the thought that the dwarf trees, those "triumphs of containment,"

> reproach
> our recognized
> but unrenounced
> confusion of
> size with grandeur.

If a writer is good to quote, he must be good to read. Leithauser's occasional rhyming is discreet, no more than the tinge of a chime; and if he rhymes "Kobe" with "bay," some people even rhyme it with "robe." His individual brand of concise fluency and agreeably uningratiating familiarity is enviable enough to elicit jealous carping from fellow practitioners. He satisfies what he terms, in lines from "Seaside Greetings," "our appetite for play at the stone heart of things," celebrating entities and objects and phenomena that, like the dragonfly in his first book, would scarcely be possible were they not real, and imparting his joy in such realities. This is a medicine we need, and it tastes good too.

D. J. ENRIGHT

D. J. Enright's *The Alluring Problem: An Essay on Irony* has just been published by Oxford University Press.

BRITAIN WITHOUT BAEDEKER

i.

From the shell's contrary run and the gull's
sugary distemper, the river cannot cover
the metalled road that like a wedding band
binds the island causeway to dry land.
The mint and salt grass taint the winter light:
its slow refusal of the vacant nests
turns toward the island like a rough caress
the idea that all of love is property
and property is merely appetite.
The season's recusants refuse to earn
their rages in the frost of intellect.
They slum along the hollow banks and beg
raw gobbets from the wealthy tourist's leg
and through their mouths the icy figures burn:
betrayal never teaches dialect.
Though in their gangs the single gulls conspire,
beyond the marsh the dead elms queue for spring
that follows our cold fever with saws and fire.

ii.

The cuckoo soils its eggs in foreign nests,
relaxes in the budding leaf, then reinvests,
and like the hours sifting over dead accounts
it cannot tell the teller from his amount.
Nor can it cry what winter celebrates
but from the overlays of ice are born
the dry commemorations of those torn
from language: the chiselled, military names
a marble wall protects, and then defames,
conjugation of the diplomat's success
with those whose wars the humble verbs are cleansing.
Our wounded fathers fathered us, and sent
us blind into the world, where we invent
the lies that comfort those we dispossess.
The dunnock and reed warbler brood the lone
survivor whose gross beak outgrows its home
until the summer breaks the cuckold from his word
and spreads the voices: drifting, brutal, absurd.

WILLIAM LOGAN

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CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 2*

after, I would gloat occasionally over the notion that somehow we Washingtonians had far greater insights into the body politic than all those poor suckers who live beyond the Beltway. I have since come to recognize that feeling for what it is—snobbishness of the first order that cannot be defended.

I have several friends in Los Angeles who care deeply about the political issues of the day, miraculously without benefit of the *Washington Post* arriving on the doorstep each morning. Does the *Los Angeles Times* fulfill all of their political junkie needs? I'll give Kaus that one. But surely he would not have us believe that any number of other publications—whether they be the *Atlantic, National Review* or even TNR—are not able to keep Angelenos current on what is in or out, politically speaking.

Another thought in L.A.'s defense, heretical though it may sound to Washington's political elite: Is it possible that one can claim status as a political intellectual without aching to read, say, every word in the *Post* about the tortured path that is Gramm-Rudman? At the risk of journalistic excommunication, I confess to stifling a yawn here and there.

I wonder how many of us in Washington find ourselves wrapped up in lively dinner discussions over the latest movies or newest Dylan album more often than over the defense budget or the tax reform bill. To be sure, Washington still retains the edge when it comes to fascination with political gossip. But don't dump too heavily on Los Angeles, Kaus. The screenplay you scorn just might turn out to be your own.

STEVEN PRESSMAN
Congressional Quarterly Inc.
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:
Congratulations to Mickey Kaus. It's about time the editors here are dealt a lashing for failing to deliver intellectual journalism of the kind he suggests—"Deukmejian calls Bradley a clod" and "Bradley calls Deukmejian a scumbag." Let's hope his piece will spell the end of this omission and get us into the wallow quickly before the rest of the intelligentsia, if any is left, picks up and follows him.

JOHN BALZAR
Political Writer, Los Angeles Times
Los Angeles, California

To the editors:
I lived in Washington for 20 years, prior to my coming to Los Angeles. Am I glad I made the switch! The absence of intellectual activity in Washington, except at the Smithsonian Institution, was boring. The provincialism of the newspapers that featured congressmen and their stripper friends was enervating.

But that's perception. Mr. Kaus is just plain wrong on at least one point. The UCLA Library is indeed great, but not because it is stagnant. It circulates two million volumes a year (not none as he says). But then that's the type of error your writer will make since he won't live here and gets his sensations of the city from the *Washington Post*.

RUSSELL SHANK
University Librarian
University of California, Los Angeles
Los Angeles, California

DRAWING THE LINE

To the editors:
In his review of *The Makers of Modern Strategy* ("Arms and Ideas," September 8), Scott Sagan states that the line of occupation of the Western Allies in Germany was settled on because Eisenhower, left without guidance from Roosevelt, judged that "there was no strictly military requirement for American troops to reach Berlin . . . before the Russians." In Sagan's words, "Stalin was permitted to draw the boundary lines of the postwar world as far west as his tanks could roll" because military rather than political objectives guided our campaign.

Basic World War II history reveals that the areas to be occupied by the West and by the U.S.S.R. had been established by the European Advisory Commission in 1944 and ratified by the Big Three at Yalta in February 1945, at a time when the Soviet forces were hundreds of miles closer to Berlin and Prague than were the Anglo-Americans.

Far from allowing Stalin to draw the line alone, the political decision drew a line much farther west than the Red Army ever got. That Eisenhower saw no need to expend lives reaching prestige objectives that we were already obligated to hand over to the U.S.S.R. is an illustration not of a blinkered soldier setting policy by "default," as Sagan apparently thinks, but of military deference to civilian authority in the best American and Clausewitzian tradition.

ED FRANK
Memphis, Tennessee

TRB, *from page 4*

can breed, the press's toleration of Reagan's whoppers parallels a similar tolerance for the more sophisticated fantasies spun by anonymous "senior White House officials." Much of what the media reports every day as news consists of "illusionary events" in the sense that nothing real has happened except that some high official has decided to push some line or other.

The *Wall Street Journal* story of August 25, for example—the main success of the disinformation campaign—was in some respects a typical "senior officials" story. It contained lots of misleading anonymous quotes but few if any actual falsehoods in support of its opening assertion that "the U.S. and Libya are on a collision course again." People at the *Journal* point this out now with some relief. The gist of that story was true: that the Reagan administration had decided to turn up the heat on Libya. It was followed by other articles twiddling the dials on the stove. A front-page story two days later in the *New York Times*, for example, reported as news that "administration officials . . . expressed concern that speculation about [the subject of the *Journal*'s story] had got out of hand."

All this is hardly different from the series of stories that came out after the disinformation campaign was revealed, with "senior administration officials" chattering away about the meaning and impact of the revelation that "senior administration officials" aren't to be trusted.

The press and the policymakers they cover share an interest in perpetuating the system of news by disingenuous rumor and leak. As Secretary Shultz told some reporters with charming frankness, the administration is just "using your predictable tendencies to report things that we try to keep secret." But it's not just a matter of journalists needing inside scuttlebutt and officials feeding it to them. It's that journalists, especially at the top level, need officials to lie so that they can "interpret" the lies with the truth.

Virtually every news organization that reported the administration's disinformation about Libya can also point in hindsight to a passage raising the possibility that (as the *Washington Post* put it at the time) "the United States is trying to psych out the Libyan strongman" by spreading false rumors. The revelation that this is precisely what was going on, therefore, ought to come as something less than a shock.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Sleep On It

SO IT WAS ALL a dream! Bobby Ewing didn't die after all. His estranged wife Pam was only dreaming. Katherine Wentworth didn't really squash Bobby with her car. In fact, Pam dreamed the entire last season of "Dallas." Everything is back the way it was a year ago: Sue Ellen still has a drinking problem, Donna's pregnancy is still healthy (she hasn't been kicked by that bull), and Mark Graison (still apparently dead after apparently killing himself) never married Pam. Friends who watch "Dallas" regularly think that the opening episode of the new season a few weeks ago, in which Pam's dream was revealed, was an enormous cheat. I think something else. I think it was the perfect manifestation of the Reagan years: wrap your troubles in dreams and dream your troubles away. Hey, a $200 billion deficit? No sweat, it's just a dream. Apartheid? Keep cool, the nightmare will be over before you know it. The Vietnam War, Hurricane Camille, the marriage of Prince Charles and Lady Di? Never happened. A few weeks from now, all of America will wake up, rub its eyes, stretch, turn on the television, and find David Hartman on the tube interviewing John F. Kennedy, now 69, tan, and witty. His views on the summit are startling. "And tomorrow," says David, hoisting his coffee cup, "Martin Luther King tells how jogging keeps him fit." That's right, folks. It was all a dream.

"JULY 28—Intimate confided that President Reagan is fascinated with life-after-death reports." So begins an entry in "Jack Anderson's Washington Letter," which I have been saving for an appropriate time (thanx and a tip of the hat to L.L. of NYC). This looks like the time. "He has read books recounting experiences of people who were revived after their vital signs had stopped. Their accounts are similar: each had sensation of leaving his body and watching doctors trying to revive him.... President believes these out-of-body reports not only are true but prove there is life after death." In other words, all of us, like Bobby Ewing, get another chance.

TWO CHANCES MAY BE all some of us get—at least for now. "No person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice," says the Twenty-second Amendment to the Constitution. There's no time to repeal it before the 1988 election, so the idea of a third term for Ronald Reagan seems dead. The Republicans are left with two choices: concede victory to the Democrats, or adopt the following strategy, which I call the Lurleen Plan. In 1966 Alabama law prohibited a governor from succeeding himself, so George Wallace persuaded his first wife, Lurleen, to run in his place. She won, and George effectively continued to govern the state. Then, in 1970, George ran and won on his own. The Lurleen Plan posits Nancy Reagan as the Republican nominee for president—though everyone will know that Ronnie's steady finger will be on the button. I have a suspicion that some White House operatives are already putting the Lurleen Plan into effect. Why do you think the drug issue has become such a hot topic? It's been Nancy's cause for years, and now it provides her with the perfect opportunity to get some ink. Soon Nancy will declare for president, Bush and Kemp will drop out, Nancy will be elected, the Twenty-second Amendment will be repealed, and R.R. will be able to run for a third term in 1992.

MY MAGAZINES STINK. Practically every magazine that arrives at my house is drenched in the smell of a particular scratch 'n' sniff perfume insert. It's called Poison, by Christian Dior, and it smells like Off insect repellent or grape Pez—cloyingly sweet and incredibly powerful. Forget poison gas. The Iraqis could use this stuff to stop the Iranians in their tracks. Scratch 'n' sniff ads were fun in the beginning, but now they're getting out of hand: you don't even have to scratch them. I like magazines that smell like 40-pound coated paper and ink. Actually, credit for the worst smell to come from a magazine lately goes not to Christian Dior but to *National Geographic*, which in its September issue did a poll to gather information on the acuity of its readers' sense of smell. Five scratch 'n' sniffs were provided. Three of them were pretty dull. One had a good clove scent. And one—number four—was a horror. It smelled like swamp gas, sharp and dense, with a hint of doom.

WHAT'S GOING ON at the *New Yorker*? Condé Nast, the magazine division of S. I. Newhouse's empire, bought a publication in a terrible slump two years ago, with sharply falling advertising pages. Newhouse's solution was to leave Mr. Shawn, the editor, alone and concentrate on making changes on the business side. The result is a magazine totally out of whack. The *New Yorker* is now running advertorials—advertising inserts masquerading as editorial copy—on the joys of California wine country, the quest for the America's Cup, and the anniversary of the tuxedo. The last even included instructions on how to tie a bow tie. *New Yorker* readers are supposed to know how to tie a bow tie. Even if they don't, they certainly don't want this deficiency pointed out to them. Worse, these advertorials are written in a mock *New Yorker* style, as if they were making fun of the magazine: "Having crossed the Golden Gate Bridge, one espies the first clue to the heaven that waits in store." *The New Yorker* is a delicate instrument. Its appeal to advertisers and readers has been almost mystical, and the many publishers who have tried to copy it have flopped. Like almost no other magazine, it has had a certain gestalt strength—the editorial, advertising, and promotional elements were all of a piece. Now it's as though two magazines are battling it out between the covers.

"WHAT IS THE number-one problem in metropolitan Washington?" That's the question that *Washingtonian* magazine posed in a poll recently. To blacks who responded, the answer, overwhelmingly, was drugs. To whites, it was traffic. And they didn't mean drug traffic. Washington is two worlds, one worried about getting shot by a thug high on crack, the other worried about getting stuck in rush hour on the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. The traffic problem is going to be tough to solve, but for drugs and crime, I have a simple solution: Let Pam Ewing sleep on it.

J.K.G.

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